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UNDER GREEN LEAVES. *Front.*

Under Green Leaves.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY,

AUTHOR OF "THE LUMP OF GOLD," "EGERIA,"
ETC. ETC.

LONDON:
G. ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET;
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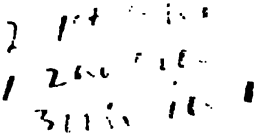

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Under Green Leaves.

Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!—

SHAKSPEARE.

Under Green Leaves.

ONE HALF-HOUR.

I.

Noon, from the village tower,—
  But ere the clock strike One,
Ay, ere one short half-hour,
  Deeds shall be done.
A warm and buzzing day,
Scented with new-mown hay,
And tremulous with song
Floating green woods among,—
Lovely to me, who lie
Under this happy sky,—

Tell me, oh, Spirit of Noon
  Haunting the turret-spire,—
What shall be done
  Ere thou expire?

II.

Over the sunny grass
A shadow delay'd to pass;
And with it came a sound
From the tree-tops to the ground,—
An echo's echo dying,
Or thought to a thought replying,
Or music of the mind
Not born of the summer wind,
That seem'd to give it breath.—
  And the song it made,
  In the greenwood shade,
Was a song of Life and Death,—
  Death in the shadow glancing,

Life in the sunshine dancing;
Life and her sister Death.

III.

"The glad air throbs with music,
As suits a bridal day,
And the chimes are merrily ringing
From a thousand turrets grey.
Strew roses! gather posies!
Youth goes on his lusty way.
The sad air sighs with music:
Hark to the under-boom!
Over a thousand dells,
Toll out the doleful bells;
There's dust for the hungry tomb.
And lonely ships at sea
Have Death in their company,—
Bury the mariners in the deep!
And let their white bones rest,

Under the billows' breast,
Where none can come to weep.

IV.

"Many an infant born,
This pleasant summer morn,
Shall die ere evening fall.
And many a scheme that blows
As freshly as the rose,
Shall drop its leaflets all,
And wither where it grows,
Ere the next chime
Shall tell the time.
And many a desolate head,
Weary of all the world has taught,
Shall know the knowledge of the dead,
And things surpassing thought.

V.

"Crooning at her door
Sits the sailor's wife.
Oh, sweet is her song and low,
Like the ripple of streams that flow
Where the long sedge-grasses grow,
As she clasps her little child,
That she loves beyond her life,
To her heart so pure and mild,
And thinks of the coming day,
When he who is far away,
Shall come again,
Come again,
Like the sweet, sweet sunshine after the rain,
To guard and shield her as of yore,
To love and cherish her more and more,
Best joy in her world of pain.

VI.

"And he whom she loves so well,
More than her tongue can tell,
  Is battling with the wave,—
  The gaping, greedy, gluttonous wave,—
That sucks him down to the pitiless grave,
Far away out on the barren sea,
  With none but the stars so cold,
  And the moonlight silvery gold,
    Looking down
    From Heaven's high crown,
On his fierce death-agony.

VII.

"The son returns with hard-earn'd wealth,
  To cheer his mother, whose locks are white;
And his mother was laid, with the turf on her breast,
  In the churchyard yesternight.

The husband comes to the wife he loves,
And his little children dear;
And the wife hath fled to a stranger's bed,
Nor left him even a tear
To freshen his heart, that will shrivel with grief,—
Sapless—fruitless—sere.

VIII.

"Outside the castle-gate,
The beggar-woman sighs,
With her pale twins at her bosom,
And a light in her glaring eyes;
She thinks of the stately Duchess,
So beautiful to see,
On her prancing steed, in her hunting-gear
With her pages at her knee;
With her plume of ostrich feathers
That waves to the summer air;—

So young, so noble, and so rich,
  So far from the reach of care.
And the beggar curses Fortune,
  And thinks of her babes forlorn,
And fondles them, and hugs them,
  And weeps that they were born.

IX.

"Inside the castle-gate,
  The Duchess sits alone,
Her long brown hair dishevell'd,
  And streaming to her zone:
She thinks of the beggar-matron,—
  And sighs,—unhappy wife!
That not to her is given
  One child to bless her life.
'I'd give,' quoth she, 'my jewels,
  My castle, my domains,

My state, my rank, my title,
And all that appertains,
For one of the tender cherubs,
That she, beloved of Heaven,
Can fold to her fruitful bosom,
And feel a blessing given.
Oh, she is rich beyond me,
'Tis I alone am poor,
And starve in the midst of plenty!—
Oh, teach me to endure!'

X.

"A knave sits plotting and spinning
His coils and meshes dark,
Alone in his secret places,
Where he deems no eye shall mark.
He sows the seeds of evil
In his foglight, murk and dim,
That they may grow in the autumn shine,
Into ripe fresh fruit for him.

Let him coil and spin
His web of sin,
  Let him plant and dig and sow!
Fate hath a besom that can sweep,
And fools may sow what wise men reap.
For the minutes ebb and flow,
Balancing as they go;
And every minute as it flies,
If it see a thousand knaves arise,
  Beholds a thousand fall,—
    The question solves,
    The globe revolves,—
  And God is over all!

XI.

"Great Cæsar sits alone,
  Weary and full of care:
How shall his armies strive,
How shall his people thrive
  In the battles that prepare,

Whose murmur comes from a distant land
  To the under-tides of the air?
And shall he fall or stand,
  And are his servants true?
And are his enemies too strong
  For his right hand to subdue?
Weary and rack'd with thought,
  He shuts himself alone,
And doth not know that his foe lies dead,
  That his rival's power is nought,
That another is on his throne;
  And that the high imperial head
That troubled the world shall throb no more;
  But lies as pulseless as a stone
On the melancholy shore.

XII.

"He knoweth not of this:
  He summons his armed men,

He passes the squadrons in review,
With their captains, ten times ten;
He sends them east and west
By the fiat of his word;
He grinds and taxes his docile realm,
Till its inmost heart is stirr'd,
And the props of his throne are shaken!—
Oh, vain—oh, worse than vain!
The heavens are black with tempest,
And he dreameth not of rain.
He looks far off for danger,
And arms lest it should burst,
While it slumbers at his footstool,
And in his hand is nursed.

XIII.

"A man with a brow care-furrow'd
And bright eyes gleaming proud,
Walks to and fro in his chamber,
And talks to himself aloud.

'I have play'd,' quoth he, 'and won,—
The deed of my life is done;
The hope of my youth and prime
Is ripe at its destined time:
I clutch the golden apple,
  I hold my head on high;—
I thank thee, oh my Fortune,
  And let the world go by;
For grief no more shall touch me!'
  Oh fool! there's danger nigh!
Whatever grief thou'st borne,
Whatever pangs have torn
Thy desolate heart forlorn,
  Are nothing to compare
With the brood of grief that nestle
  At the core of thine apple fair.
They breed in thy happy fortune
  Thy dearest hopes to cross;
Poor dupe! thy good is evil,
  Thy victory is loss.

XIV.

"A young man sits lamenting
With his children at his knee,
And his fond true wife beside him:
'I'm a wretch!' quoth he;
'An evil fate pursues me;
Whate'er I touch I slay;
And this, my last reliance—
My chance, my hope, my stay—
Has died like the last year's blossoms,
Never to bloom again!'
Oh blind, to grieve at Fortune!
Oh sluggard, to complain!
The thing which thou hast lost
Was big with coming sorrow;
Joy dwelt on its lips to-day,
Grief grew in its heart for morrow.

Look up to Heaven, thou dreamer!
  If smitten, thou art whole;
And learn that a pang surmounted.
  Is healing to the soul."

XV.

Half-past twelve on the turret clock,
  Thou'rt gone, oh Spirit of Noon!
With the last faint echoes of the chime,
  That died in the woods of June.
Thou'rt gone, in thy robe of amber,
  And diadem of flame,
To make the wide world's circuit—
  Another, and yet the same;
To bear God's justice with thee,
  And scatter it through the Earth;
To balance the wonder of our death
  By the mystery of our birth;

To humble the exalted,
  To turn the Wrong to Right,
And out of the gloom of Evil
  To weave the web of Light.
Kind and beautiful Spirit,
  Just and merciful Day,
Bearing thy God's commission,
  To give and to take away!

March, 1855.

LULLINGSWORTH.

It is an ancient house:
Four hundred years ago
Men dug its basements deep,
And roof'd it from the wind;
And held within its walls
The joyous marriage-feast,
The christening and the dance.
Four hundred years ago
They scoop'd and fill'd the moat,
Where now the rank weeds grow,
And waterlilies vie
In whiteness with the swans—
A solitary pair—
That float, and feed, and float,
Beneath the crumbling bridge
And past the garden-wall.

Four hundred years ago
They planted trees around
To shield it from the sun;
And still these oaks and elms,
The patriarchs of the wold,
Extend their sturdy boughs
To woo the summer breeze.
The old house, ivy grown,
Red, green, and mossy gray,
Still lifts its gables quaint;
And in the evening sun
Its windows, as of yore,
Still gleam with ruddy light
Reflected from the west.

Still underneath the eaves,
Or rafters of the porch,
The glancing swallow builds;
Still through its chimneys tall
Up streams the curling smoke

From solitary fires,—
For still the ancient race
Live in the ancient home,
But of their glory shorn,
And hastening to decay.

Their last descendant dwells,
Childless and very old,
Amid its silent halls:
He loves the lonely place,
Its furniture antique,
Its panels of rich oak
Worm-eaten and grotesque,
Its manuscripts and books,
Its pictures on the walls,
And carvings on the stair.
'Tis all he hath to love;
Its life hath pass'd away—
The beautiful human life—

And left him frail and sad,
A waif on Time's bleak shore.

No children in its courts
Carol, like happy birds,
The livelong summer day.
No maidens with blue eyes
Dream of the trysting-hour,
Or bridal's happier time.
No youths with glowing hearts
Muse, in its shady walks,
Of high heroic deeds,
Or glory to be sought
In perilous fields of fame.
The very dog is mute,
And slumbers on the hearth,
Too impotent to bark.
The cawing rooks alone
Maintain the song of life,
And prate amid the elms

With harsh rough colloquy—
A music in itself,
Or if not music, joy.

The Lord of Lullingsworth
Is lonely, not austere:
A melancholy man,
With long locks flowing white,
And back unbent by age,
Beloved, yet little known.
He seeks not intercourse—
But takes it if it comes—
Except with little babes,
Who gather round his path
Or cling about his knees—
And love, yet know not why,
The melancholy man.
These, and the village priest,
His almoner and friend,
Are all his confidants.

A generous hand he hath,
And giveth liberal dole—
How liberal no one knows.
A something for the school
Or for the village church;
A something for old friends
Who fall to penury;
Or ancient servitors,
Too feeble for their work;
A something for the State,
When Patriotism calls,
Or high Philanthropy;
A something for the needs
Of sickness and distress,
Of helpless orphan babes
And widows left forlorn;
A something for himself,
Perchance the least of all;—
So flows the stream of wealth,
That once more affluent

Ran in impetuous flood
And spent itself in pomp;
But now, a quiet brook,
Trickles through by-ways green
And edges them with flowers.

The house hath many tales:—
Four hundred years of men,
Of human birth and death,
Of love, and faith, and hope,
Of glory and of shame,
And all that mortals feel,
Might yield large histories,
If there were tongues to tell.
But no one knows their scope.
The incidents are blurred,
Or else forgotten quite;
Gone with the song of birds,
Or with the leaves that fell
In ancient centuries.

A few perchance survive
In mouldy chronicles,
Or hang upon the lips
Of parish pensioners.
But if you'd hear one tale,
Amid the multitude,
And gather on the shore
One little grain of sand,—
That grain a human life,—
Listen, and you shall hear
This old man's history.

'Twas forty years ago,
The Lord of Lullingsworth
Led home his happy wife,
The joy of all who saw,
The glory of his heart.
'Twas twenty years ago,
A pale and patient saint,
Still young and fair, she died,

And left him in the world,
A maze without a clue,
A tree without a root;
Yet not all desolate,
Nor utterly forlorn.

Four daughters and three sons,
The eldest sweet eighteen,
The youngest but a day,
Remain'd around his hearth
To cheer his downward path.
And much he loved them all;—
Much for their own dear sakes,
Much for their mother's, lost,
And much for love return'd.

He thought as he caress'd
Each infant in his arms,
And listen'd with delight
To every lisping word,

Sweeter than word full spoke,
And heard the sharp clear laugh
Of Innocence and Joy
Ring merry through the hall,
That Time had not the power
Or Circumstance the art
To make him cherish more
These links from Earth to Heaven,—
The children of the dead.

But each returning day
Beheld his love increase,
Until he sometimes fear'd
Such fond idolatry
Of creatures of the earth
Was blasphemy to Heaven.
But Love transcends the mind;
And Reason, if it strive
Against Love's high decree,
Strives but with spears of straw,

Against stone battlements;
Or if it fly the strife,
It abdicates its throne,
And serves as minister
The king it might depose.

As each ingenuous heart
Expanded in his smile,
And each young intellect
Unfolded like a flower
Beneath the kindly beams
Of his paternal face,
He look'd around his hearth;—
And though one vacant place
Threw o'er his happiness
The shade of bygone grief,
He counted all his flock,
And said within himself,—
"The world is good and fair,
And I am happy yet;

Lord! who hath given me these,
Preserve them one and all,
That I may train them up
To glorify Thy name,
And meet me, glorified,
At the appointed time,
Before Thy Throne of Grace."

So grew they in his sight,
His task, his hope, his joy,
His recompense of life;
Till one unhappy morn
Insidious Fever crept,
A serpent, to his fold;
And not content with one,
Snatched from his jealous arms
Three younglings of his flock,—
The sweetest,—best-beloved,—
The tendrils of his heart.
Not best-beloved in life,

But oh, far more than best,
When Death transfigured them,
And o'er the pallid clay
Threw his celestial robes.
None saw the father weep.
His face was always calm,
Serene, and sad as night,
Begemm'd with inner worlds
Of silent suffering.

Years passed; and from his lips
There issued no complaint.
Four treasures still remain'd,
Brought nearer to his heart
By thought of those in Heaven.
If to the little world
That watch'd his daily life,
And knew how good and brave
And generous he was,
There seem'd to be a change

In look, or word, or deed,
It was that in his eyes
Seem'd pity more benign;
In every word he spake
More genial sympathy,
And in his liberal hand
Beneficence more rich.

He had but tasted grief;—
The overbrimming cup
Was offered to his lips,
And he had drunk, and lived.
The cup was yet to drain;
And happy he the while,
That knew not, nor could dream
The misery of the draught.

Short were the history,
If told by fact, and date,
And sequence of event.

Long were the history,
If told by agonies
Endured from day to day
And bravely fought against,
Until the unequal strife
Made havoc in the halls
And garden of the soul;
Laid waste the pleasant paths,
And rooted up the flowers,—
Sweet flowers,—to bloom no more!
But long or short,—'tis sad,
As all life-histories are,
Could tongues interpret them.

Prop of his house, his son,
By high ambition fired,
Intolerant of ease,
Went forth in honour's ranks
To fight his country's foes.
He died the hero's death,

Waving a snow-white plume
To cheer his followers,
And planting on the breach,
Won by his bravery,
The flag without a peer;
His last words—"Victory!
My father! Bear him this;—
(A locket of dark hair)
"And tell him how I died!"

Two other sons—fair boys—
As radiant as the morn,
And fresh as blooms of May,
Return'd from Eton's halls,
Greedy of holidays,
And joys of happy home.
They bathed themselves at noon,
In clear inviting stream.
They frolick'd on the shore,
They braved remoter depths,

They gamboll'd in the flood,
And turning on their backs,
Floated, with face to Heaven,
In easy luxury,
As white and pure as swans;
Then dived in daring sport,
And wantonness of strength,
For pebbles deep adown,
Which having gain'd, they threw
Up in the sunny air,
And caught them as they fell.
There was not in the world,
In all its wealth of life
And innocence and joy,
Two happier, brighter things,
More beautiful than they.

A sudden cry of pain
Rang through the mead a mile,
And startled at the sound,

The younger brother turn'd,
And saw his elder born
Battling the deeps for life,
And all his fair young face
Alight with agony.

Impulsive at a thought,
He swam, and grasp'd the hand
Outstretch'd in blind despair.
'Twas Death's convulsive throe!
The dying swimmer caught
That weak fraternal hand,
That fond fraternal neck,
And bore into the grave
The young and tender life,
For whose superior sake
He'd thrice have given his own

'Twas a short agony
That took them both to heaven.

Go to the village church,
You'll see their cenotaph,
A master-piece of art;
Lock'd in each other's arms
The marble seraphs lie;
Lovely in form and face,
But not so beautiful,
Or so divinely fair,
No, not by absent soul—
As those whose purity
They strive to shadow forth.

All thought this bitter grief
Would break the father's heart.
Perchance it did—none knew.
He travell'd into France,
To Italy and Spain,
He and his eldest born,
His loveliest and his last.

Oh, sweet beyond compare,
In roseate bloom of youth,
And dazzling womanhood,
She glitter'd at his side;
Men saw her in a crowd
And knew no other face;
And when she glided out
From church or festival,
They knew not how it was,
But felt that it was dark.

Before her brothers died
The maiden was betroth'd
To one her sire approved,
And would have chos'n himself
As helpmate of her life,
If she, with finer sense,
Had not from all mankind
Singled him out—true soul—
Her own soul's counterpart.

So beautiful and frail,
Bore one untimely bud,
And perish'd where she grew,
Leaving two hearts forlorn,—
One young, with strength, mayhap,
To live and love anew;
One sad and weary old,
Too old to hope again.

How merciful is Heaven:
The oak foredoom'd to brave
Five hundred years of storm,
Grows hard and rough of kind
And finds in storm itself
A sustenance and power.
The blind man's universe,
Uncheer'd by light of Heaven,
By man's or Nature's face,
Throbs with ecstatic sound
And music of the spheres.

And in our daily life,
The arrows aim'd to kill,
The accidents, the pit,
The perilous fire or flood,
Receive not every day
The victims they demand.
The arrow, warp'd aside,
Avoids Achilles' heel,
And guardian angels fly
On wings of sudden thought,
Or come, life messengers
In God's electric car,
Whose wheels are impulses,
To lead us unperceived
Beyond the crowded path
Where ambush'd dangers lie;
To heal th'envenom'd wound,
Or shield us from the blow.

The kind and tender heart

Broke not, but bore its grief;
And Patience, like a crown,
Shone on his wrinkled front,
And mark'd him for a king.
But if the heart escaped,
The delicate brain gave way.
An atom was displaced
From Reason's perfect throne;
Th'intangible chord was snapp'd
Which binds the soul to sense;
The clear aërial bells
That make sweet harmonies
In Thought's imperial dome,
Were smitten out of tune,
And yielded back no more
Their beautiful accord.

The balance of his mind
In all his common life,
In converse with the world,

In duty's ceaseless round,
In home or state affairs,
In courtesies complete,
Or high philosophy,
Preserved its evenness.
On one dark point alone
The balance was destroy'd.
On one pervading thought
The bells were out of tune—
If out of tune they were—
And not by spirit hands
Attuned, ineffable,
To higher harmonies
Than pure cold Reason dreams.

The children were not dead,
Nor she, the saint who bore!
The losing of the last,
Restored them all to life,
Young, beautiful, beloved,

As in the bygone time
When in his path they grew,
Companions of his hours.

All other creatures die;
The green earth covers them;
But in his waking thought
These live immortally,
And know not Death's embrace,
Nor cold Corruption's lip.
He sees them in his walks;
His wife still comforts him;
His little children still
Gambol about his feet,
And prattle in his ear.

Each day at morn and noon,
And at his evening meal,
His board is spread for nine;
His inner eyes behold

Eight spirits at his side,—
Each in the usual place,
Visible—palpable.
In their high company,
A calm pure happiness
Dwells in his soul serene,
And feeds itself on thoughts
Too great for utterance.
Life blossoms out of death;
Nothing shall part them more!

Thus God's great balances
Right every seeming wrong,
Atone for every ill,
And in the poison'd cup
Infuse the precious balm,
That out of transient pain
Makes lasting happiness.
Who knows this old man's joy?
None but himself, perhaps—

Perhaps not even he.
Thou who hast heard the tale
Believe that Heaven is just,
And bear thy lot resign'd.

THE WINES.

I.

WHENCE comest thou,
  Oh lady rare,
With soft blue eyes
  And flaxen hair,
And showers of ringlets
  Clustering fair?
And what hast thou got
  In that bowl of thine?
"I come," quoth she,
  "From the beautiful Rhine,
And in my bowl
  Is the amber wine.
Pure as gold
  Without alloy,

Mild as moonlight,
  Strong as joy;
Taste, and treasure it—
Drink, but measure it—
  Thirsty boy!"

II.

And who art thou,
  So ruddy and bright,
With round full eyes
  Of passionate light,
And clustering tresses
  Dark as night?
And what hast thou drawn
  From the teeming tun?
"I come," quoth she,
  "From the blue Garonne,
Where the vines are kiss'd
  By the bountiful sun,

And the regal Claret,
  Kind, though coy,
Flushes the hills
  With purple joy.
Taste, and treasure it—
Drink, but measure it—
  Thirsty boy!"

III.

And whence art thou,
  With bounding tread,
With cheeks like morning,
  Rosy red,
And eyes like meteors
  In thy head?
And what dost thou pour
  Like jewell'd rain?
"I come," quoth she,
  "From the sunny plain,

And bear a flagon
  Of bright Champagne,—
Age's cordial,
  Beauty's toy,—
Dancing, glancing,
  Wine of Joy.
Taste, and treasure it—
Drink, but measure it—
  Thirsty boy!"

TWO HOUSES.

"'Twill overtask a thousand men,
With all their strength and skill,
To build my Lord ere New Year's eve
His castle on the hill."
"Then take two thousand," said my Lord,
"And labour with a will."

They wrought, these glad two thousand men,
But long ere winter gloom,
My Lord had found a smaller house,
And dwelt in one dark room;
And one man built it in one day,
While bells rang ding, dong, boom!
Shut up the door! shut up the door!
Shut up the door till Doom!

THE BRIONY WREATH.

I.

I TWINED around my true love's brow,
  Amid her dark brown hair,
A wreath of Briony from the hedge,
  With rings and berries fair;
And call'd her "Lady Briony,"
  And darling of the air.

II.

We walk'd like children, hand in hand,
  Or on the meadow-stile
Sat down, not seeking happiness,
  But finding it the while
In Love's unconscious atmosphere,
  Or sunlight of a smile.

III.

"Sweet Lady of my heart," I said,
"Thou chid'st me in the morn,
For talking of the 'worthless weeds'
With unconsider'd scorn;
But now, for bonnie Briony's sake,
The chiding shall be borne.

IV.

"So pleasant are its tendril-rings,
That twist and curl and twine;
So graceful are its leaves and fruit
Amid those locks of thine;
Henceforth to me shall Briony
Be equal of the Vine."

V.

"But not for sake of me!" she said;
"I'd have thee just and true,

And love the wild weeds for themselves,
  Sweet babes of sun and dew,
As virtuous as the Rose herself,
  Or Violet blushing blue.

VI.

"Of all the weeds, and bounteous buds,
  That drink the summer shower,
And lift their blossoms through the corn,
  Or smile in hedge and bower,
I plead the cause;—come hear the tale
  And love them from this hour.

VII.

"You've call'd me Lady Briony;
  Behold my sisters bright,
My fair companions of the wood,
  Who love the morning light,—
Valerian, Saffron, Camomile,
  And Rue, and Aconite;—

VIII.

"The golden Mallow of the Marsh,
The Hemlock, broad and rank,
The Nightshade, Foxglove, Meadow-sweet,
And Tansy on the bank,
And Poppy with her sleepful eyes,
And Water-Iris dank.

IX.

"Are we not fair? Despise us not!—
We soothe the couch of pain;
We bring divine forgetfulness
To calm the stormy brain;
And through the languid pulse of life
Drop healing, like the rain.

X.

"There's not a weed, however small,
That peeps where rivers flow,

Or in the bosom of the woods
  Has privilege to grow,
But has some goodness in its breast,
  Or bounty to bestow.

XI.

"And if we poison;—yours the fault!
  Behold our green leaves wave,
And seem to sigh as men go past
  Wayfarers to the grave;—
'Use us unwisely, we may kill,—
  Use wisely, and we save.'

XII.

"Our virtues and our loveliness
  Are none the less our own,
Because you fail to seek them out,
  Or miss them when they're shown;
And if we're common, so is light,
  And every blessing known."

XIII.

"Well pleaded, Lady Briony!
  Thou'rt good as thou art fair;
And were there no one in the copse,
  I'd kiss thy lips, I swear!"
Her laugh rang merry as a bell—
  "Well, kiss me, if you dare!"

THE INTERVIEW.

I.

Heavily the rain-drops
  Beat the pane;
On the housetop hoarsely
  Creak'd the vane;
The wind came battering by,
Like fierce artillery
  Against a town;
Or with a fitful wail
Crept through the leafless vale
  Or moorland brown.

II.

In that wintry midnight,
  Through the gloom,
I beheld a vision
  In my room;
I shudder'd at the sight,—
Its face in ghastly light
  Familiar shone;
And all its heart lay bare
As a landscape in the air,—
  Mine own! mine own!

III.

'Twas my face before me,
  Pallid-hued;
'Twas mine eyes beheld me
  Where I stood.
Pointing its fingers thin,
This thing, with hideous grin,
  And angry start,

Exclaim'd, "Thou knowest much;—
Knowest thou this,—I touch?"—
And touch'd its heart.

IV.

With a flash electric,
It became
Palpable before me
Like a flame;
And I could read and see
Its inmost mystery,
And breach of law;
Its guilty passion strong,
Its weakness hidden long,
And blackest flaw.

V.

Perfidies unnumber'd;
Secrets dire,
Written out and burning
As with fire;

The motives of a life,
Laid bare as with a knife,
  Through quivering flesh;
Dead things that no man knew,
Most wretched, but most true,
  Revived afresh.

VI.

All my love and madness;
  All my guilt;
All my tears of anguish
  Vainly spilt;
My agonies and fears;
The skeletons of years;
  My hopes entomb'd;
My crimes; my broken truth;
Up from the deeps of youth
  Before me loom'd.

VII.

"Hide it, cruel spirit,
  Or I die!

'Tis too vile to look at
With life's eye!"—
I cover'd up my face;
Between me and its place
Came mist and cloud:
"And is this heart, my heart—
So foul in every part?"—
I groan'd aloud.

VIII.

Light broke in upon me
From afar;
And faith in God, high-shining
Like a star.
And when I look'd again,
I saw, amid the stain
Of that frail clay,
A glow of pure desire—
A spark of heavenly fire—
Burning alway.

IX.

"Shall I sit lamenting?—
  Ah, not so!
Sympathy and pity
  For men's woe,
A love surpassing death,
A calm but humble faith,
  To me are given;
Accuser!—in this hour
My heart defies thy power,
  With strength from Heaven!"

THE LOVER'S DREAM OF THE WIND.

"The Wind before it woos the Harp,
Is but the wild and tuneless air,
Yet as it passes through the chords,
Changes to Music rare."—T. POWELL.

I.

I DREAM'D thou wert a fairy Harp,
Untouch'd by mortal hand,
And I the voiceless, sweet west wind,
A roamer through the land.
I touch'd, I kiss'd thy trembling strings,
And lo! my common air
Throbb'd with emotion caught from thee,
And turn'd to music rare.

II.

I dream'd thou wert a Rose in bloom,
  And I the gale of spring,
That sought the odours of thy breath,
  And bore them on my wing.
No poorer thou, but richer I,—
  So rich, that far at sea,
The grateful mariners were glad,
  And bless'd both thee and me.

III.

I dream'd thou wert the Evening Star,
  And I a lake at rest,
That saw thine image all the night
  Reflected on my breast.
Too far!—too far!—come dwell on Earth,
  Be Harp and Rose of May;—
I need thy music in my heart,—
  Thy fragrance on my way.

DOWN UPON THE GREEN EARTH.

I.

FIVE hundred years the royal tree
Has waved in the woods his branches free;
But king no longer shall he stand,
To cast his shadow o'er the land;
The hour has come when he must die:
Down upon the green earth let him lie!

II.

No more beneath his spreading boughs
Shall lovers breathe their tender vows;
No more with early fondness mark
Their names upon his crinkled bark,

Or idly dream and softly sigh:
Down upon the green earth let him lie!

III.

The lightning stroke has o'er him pass'd,
And never harm'd him first or last;
But mine are strokes more sure, I trust,
To lay his forehead in the dust;
My hatchet falls—the splinters fly:
Down upon the green earth let him lie!

IV.

But yet, although I smite him down,
And cast to earth his forest crown,
The good old tree shall live again,
To plough deep furrows o'er the main,
And flaunt his pennant to the sky:
Down upon the green earth let him lie

V.

Full-breasted to the favouring breeze,
He shall be monarch of the seas,
And bear our Britain's triumphs far,
In calm or tempest, peace or war;
'Tis but to live that he must die:
Down upon the green earth let him lie!

THE STEPPING-STONES.

I.

MAIDEN on the stepping-stones
  O'er the brawling river,
Pass, nor stop to gaze below;
Heed not how the waters flow,
  Rolling on for ever.

II.

Shallow seeming, deep as death,
  Rolls the haunted river;
Evil spirits in its wave
Lurk to drag thee to the grave,
  Pitiless for ever.

I would I were a poet,
  And that my thoughts could reach
The magic and the mystery,
  And affluence of speech;—
That I might tell my secrets
  And all that I could teach;—
Or that some kindly minstrel,
  With thoughts akin to mine,
Would deign to sit beside me,
  And help me to entwine
My music with his language
  Into a chain divine,
That men might bind their hearts with,
  Like a trellis'd vine.

But the melodies! the harmonies!
  They die as they are born,
With none to understand them;—
So sweetly as I plann'd them,
  In my joy forlorn!

The breath of an emotion
  And a happy pain,
They drop on the wide, wide ocean,
  Like the barren rain;
And when I would revive them,
  I look for them in vain.

PART II.—HELL-PAINS.

Oh, vile, vile catgut-scrapers,
  Tormentors of sweet Sound,
That bruise her, and destroy her,
  My queen, my goddess crown'd!
What has dear Music done,
  She that so loveth us,
Ye bloodless and stone-hearted,
  That you should use her thus?

Each movement of your arms
  Goes through me like a pang!—
Ye singers and horn-blowers,
  There's death in every twang!
'Twas surely Satan school'd you,
  And well you've learn'd your parts,
To vex, to plague, to torture
  Our unoffending hearts!

You could not be more cruel,
  If, wielding barbs and prongs,
You dug them in my bosom,
  And call'd the misery,—songs!
My ear is wrench'd and bleeding
  At every note you make;
Be silent—oh, be silent—
  For heavenly Pity's sake!

What would I give! what tribute
  Of worship and of tears,

If Song, as I have dream'd it,
  Could flow on my happy ears!
If one—one only singer,
  Amid this peopled earth,
Could understand my music
  As I who gave it birth;—
Such as my soul design'd it!—
  Alas! 'tis vain to seek;—
Men sing, and the hot blood rushes
  In madness to my cheek,
And women tear my heart out,
  As they squeal, and scream, and shriek.

Come, bore in my ear with corkscrews!
  Make every nerve a knot,
And pierce my brain with needles,
  If pain must be my lot;
But cease, oh! cease, in mercy,
  This misery supreme,
That Hell can never equal!—

And let me lie and dream
That to my soul, long-suffering,
Will due reward be given,—
My music sung by angels
Amid the choir of Heaven!

PART III.—HEAVEN-JOYS.

O Music! my delight!
My soul's supremest joy!
Let me lie to-night, to-night,
On thy bosom coy!
Let me lie all night awake,
Embalm'd in thy honey breath,
That wafts me up to Heaven,
In a wild ecstatic death.
Up! up! above the stars
With thee I float! I soar!

To the shadow of God's throne!
  To the world-bespangled floor!
Where sit the white-robed seraphs,
  Singing for evermore!

O Music! oh, my life!
  How beautiful art thou!
With the Love in thy deep, deep heart,
  And the Wisdom on thy brow!
As I play with the golden hair
That falls o'er thy shoulders fair,
  I deem that every thread
To my toying fingers given,
  Is a ray of sunlight spread,
Or a string from the Harp of Heaven.
I feel thy beating heart,
  And know, sweet lady mine,
That it throbs to the march of worlds,
  With a harmony divine.

I touch; but dare not kiss thee,
  For the glow of thy burning eyes,
Lest I should yield my spirit
  In my speechless ecstasies,
And be slain like a mortal lover
  Who dares to raise his thought
To the beauty of a goddess,
  Loving, but lightning-fraught!

Yet, since I'm born to die,
  And to float into the Past,
Let me die on thy beating bosom,
  My bride, my first and last!
Drinking thy whisper'd rapture,
  Let me faint upon thy breast,
And melt away in echoes,
  Immortal with the blest!

KILRAVOCK TOWER.

FORLORN old tower! that lookest sadly down
Upon the river glittering in the light,
Upon the green leaves of the clambering woods,
And o'er the wide expanse of mountain-land,
How many tales thine ancient walls might tell!
And yet, thou silent undivulging tower,
What couldst thou tell us that we do not know?
The matter of all history is the same.
Time in all changes can but iterate
The morn and eve, the noon-time and the night,
The spring's fresh promise and the autumnal fruit,
The leaves of summer and the winter's snow.
And human story still repeats itself,—
The form may differ, but the soul remains.

Four hundred years ago, when thou wert built,
Men err'd and suffer'd ;—Truth and Falsehood waged
One with the other their perpetual war ;—
And Justice and Injustice, Right and Wrong,
Succumb'd and triumph'd as they do to-day.
The young heart loved with passionate earnestness,
The old heart scorn'd all follies but its own ;
And Joy and Sorrow—Jealousy—Revenge—
Lusty Ambition—skulking Avarice—
Patience and Zeal—and persecuting Rage—
Pity and Hope—and Charity and Love—
All good and evil passions of the mind,
Brighten'd or darken'd—oh, thou mouldering wall!
Through all the landscape of humanity.

Couldst thou divulge whatever thou hast seen,
Thou couldst but call these spirits from the Past
To read us lessons.—Ancient Tower! thy voice
Need not instruct us ; for we look around
On highways or on byways of our life,

And find no sorrow of the ancient days
Unparallel'd in ours; no love sublime,
No patient and heroic tenderness,
No strong endurance in adversity,
No womanly or manly grace of mind,
That we could not, if every truth were known,
Match with its fellow in our later days.
So keep, old Tower, thy secrets to thyself!
There's not a hovel in the crowded town,
That could not tell us tomes of histories
Of good and evil, wonderful as thine.

KILRAVOCK, NAIRNSHIRE.

HORNYHAND.

I.

How now, Hornyhand,
Toiling in the crowd,
What is there in thee or thine
That thou scornest me and mine—
Looking down so proud?
Thou'rt the bee, and I'm the drone!—
Not so,—Hornyhand!—
Sit beside me on the sward;—
Where's the need to stand?
And we'll reason, thou and I,
'Twixt the green grass and the sky.

HORNYHAND

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II.

Thou canst plough and delve,
Thou canst weave and spin,
On thy brow are streaks of care,
Iron-grey 's thy scanty hair
And thy garments thin ;—
Were it not for such as thou,
Toiling morn and night,
Luxury would lose its gauds,
And the land its might ;
Mart and harbour would decay,
Tower and temple pass away.

III.

Granted, Hornyhand !
High 's the work you do ;—
Spring-time sowing, autumn tilth,
And the red wine's lusty spilth,
Were not but for you.

Art and arms, and all the pride
Of our wealth and state,
Start from Labour's honest hands,—
Labour high and great,
Sire of Plenty, friend of Mirth,
Master of the willing Earth.

IV.

Yet, good Hornyhand,
Why shouldst thou be vain?
Why should builder, ploughman, smith,
Boastful of their strength and pith,
Scorn the busy brain?
Working classes, self-bedubb'd!—
As if none but they
Labour'd with incessant toil,
Night as well as day,
With the spirit and the pen,—
Teachers, guides, and friends of men!

V.

Drones there are, no doubt;—
Yet not all who seem:
Flesh and blood are not the whole,
There's a honey of the soul,
Whatsoe'er thou deem.
Is the man who builds a book,
That exalts and charms,
Not as good as he who builds
With his brawny arms?
What were Labour but for Thought?—
Baseless effort, born of nought!

VI.

Many a noble heart,
Many a regal head,
Labours for our native land
Harder than the horniest hand
For its daily bread.

Painter, poet, statesman, sage,
Toil for human kind,
Unrewarded but of Heaven,
And the inner mind.
Thou recantest?—So!—'Tis done!
Pass from shadow into sun!

SHACKABACK.

This term is applied, in some of the rural districts of England, to a lazy fellow, who loves to doze in the sunshine rather than to work, and who would rather poach than plough.

I.

THEY call me Shackaback ;—
Shackaback ;—
And knave and lazy loon,
Because, though hale and strong,
I'm idle all day long,
And carol to the glimmer of the moon.
Let them rail, Shackaback !
There is money in thy sack,
Quite enough for the needs of to-day ;
Let the angry Justice growl,
And the Overseer howl—
While it lasts, Shackaback will play.

II.

It may be, Shackaback,—
Shackaback,—
That heedless of the morn,
Thou'rt as happy as "my Lord,"
Or "his Worship" at the board,
Or the Lawyer, money-grubbing and forlorn.
Let them grub, Shackaback!
There are blossoms on thy track;—
'Tis something to have nothing, yet be gay,—
To lie upon the grass,
And to watch the shadows pass,
Without debts to gather in, or to pay!

III.

They say that Shackaback,—
Shackaback,—
Goes out, when nights are clear,

With the musket or the snare,
For the partridge or the hare,
With his comrades "in the season of the year."
Have they proof, Shackaback?
If they have, why, then good lack!—
I can travel like my betters—and away!
And if not, why, let them rail—
I've my bacon and my ale,
And leisure to be merry while I may!

OBVERSE AND REVERSE.

PART I.—THE EMPRESS.

I.

SCANT and frosty is my hair,
Age and care
Clog my pulses, thin my blood,—
I would give my royal crown,
Gem-bestud,
Purple robes and ermine-down,
For the tresses rich and brown
Of a clown:
I would yield up gold and pearl,
For the bright eyes of a girl;

Prosperous counties—all my wealth,
For a country maiden's health;
Duchies wide—
All my pride—
All my armies—all my ships,
For the blood of youthful lips.

II.

At my palace-window oft—
Up aloft,
Looking down the crowded street.
I behold the maidens go,
Brisk of feet
To the market or the show,
Laughing, tripping to and fro
In a row;
And could hate them—woe is me,—
For their light limbs moving free,
For their brisk elastic tread,
For their cheeks like cherries red,

For their hair
Flowing fair!—
Oh! the May-time I have lost;
Oh! the nipping of the Frost!

PART II.—THE SEMPSTRESS.

I.

I WISH I were an Empress,
And had a crown to wear,
A stomacher of diamonds,
And pearls to deck my hair,
And a train of purple velvet
For noblemen to bear.

II.

I wish I were an Empress,
  And sat upon a throne,
Receiving great ambassadors
  From every clime and zone;
With princes at my footstool
  To make my pleasure known.

III.

I wish I were an Empress,
  And rode a prancing bay,
Amid my people shouting
  And garlanding my way;
With trumpeters before me—
  Tooroo!—Tooroo!—Tooray!

IV.

I wish I were an Empress—
  The glory of the land,

With half a dozen monarchs
  Contending for my hand,
Which I should scorn to give them—
  Let all men understand;

V.

Which I should scorn to give them,
  As far too great a prize,
Unless to some one handsome,
  And brave, and good, and wise,
Who loved me more than kingdoms,
  For the twinkle of mine eyes.

VI.

I wish I were an Empress,
  My crown upon my head;—
I'd feed the poor man's orphans
  Who lack'd their daily bread,
And give each maid a dowry,
  Who needed one to wed.

VII.

I wish I were an Empress—
  Alas, my cruel fate!
I'm nothing but a pretty girl,
  And toil both hard and late,
And waste my youth in sighing—
  Too poor to find a mate!

SUPPOSITIONS.

THAT Earth's no Paradise
We know as well as you,
What then? you dark dull soul!
Suppose in the deep blue sky
There never was seen a star,
Suppose the bounteous Earth
No more brought forth a flower,
And trees were barren sticks—
Like you, my worthy friend!—
And never put out a leaf
To wave in the summer wind;—
And suppose the free fresh air
Were stagnant as a pool;—
'Tis possible you might live—
But where would be the charm

Of the garden and the fields
And the beauty of the sky?
  And, coming to nearer things,
Suppose there were no grass
To cover the naked clay;
Suppose the birds were mute,
And nightingales and larks
Were dumb as perch or trout;
And suppose there were no dogs
To look in the face of man,
Confiding and beloved;
No horses and no kine
To minister to his use?
You could live—'twere vain to doubt—
Like the oyster on the bank,
And prize your grovelling life
And cling to it, if Death
Untimely summon'd you
To quit its stagnant shore;—
But many a true delight,

And many an innocent charm,
And many a thing of joy
Would leave the world less fair
To men of finer mould,
Though fit enough for you.
  Go away, grumbler! go!
And ere you talk again
Of the utter misery
And darkness of the world,
Be grateful for the flowers.
And if your purblind eyes,
My most respectable friend!—
Can dare to look so high,
Be thankful for the stars.

THE COBBLER.

Ben Arthur, or the Cobbler, rises in great majesty and grandeur at the head of Loch Long to the height of 2,400 feet—his fantastic peak cracked and shattered into every conceivable form. From one point it resembles the figure of a cobbler. Hence the popular name of the mountain.—*Tourists' Guide.*

I.

FAR away! up, in his rocky throne,
The gaunt old Cobbler dwells alone.
Around his head the lightnings play
Where he sits with his lapstone, night and day,
No one seeth his jerking awl,
No one heareth his hammer fall;
But what he doth when mists enwrap
The bald and barren mountain-top,
And cover him up from the sight of man,
No one knoweth—or ever can.

II.

Oft in the night, when storms are loud,
He thunders from the drifting cloud,
And sends his voice o'er sea and lake
To bid his brother Bens awake;
And Lomond, Lawers, and Venue,
Answer him back with wild halloo;
And Cruachan shouts from his splinter'd peaks,
And the straths respond when the monarch speaks;
And hill with hill and Ben with Ben,
Talk wisdom—meaningless to men.

III.

And oft he sings, this Cobbler old,
And his voice rings loud from his summits cold,
And the north wind helps him with organ-swell,
And the rush of streams as they leap the fell.
But none interprets right or wrong
The pith and burden of his song,

Save one, a weird and crazy wight,
Oppress'd with the gift of the second sight,
Who tells the shepherds of Glencroe
What the Cobbler thinks of our world below.

IV.

"Cobble?" he saith, "we cobble all,
Wise and simple, great and small.
The king from under his golden crown,
Over his troubled realm looks down,
For the state machine is out of gear,
And grates and creaks on the people's ear:
'Cobble it up!' he cries, forlorn,
'To last us till to-morrow morn;
'Twill serve my time if that be done—
Cobble and patch—and let it run!'

V.

"And statesmen look—the cold and proud—
On the sweating, moiling, groaning crowd,

And hear the murmur, hoarse and deep,
Of the discontent that will not sleep;
And half reluctant, half afraid,
To touch the ills themselves have made,
They take the bristle and awl in hand,
And cobble, cobble, through the land.
'Strike your hammers, wax your thumbs,
After us the deluge comes!'

VI.

"The sage puts out his sleepy head,
From the hole in the wall where he was bred,
And looks at the world, that seems to him
To be going wrong in the foglight dim.
'A shoe!' quoth he, 'an ancient shoe,
Letting the mire and the water through.
I can mend it, I opine,
I've the leather, the wax, the twine;
I'm the man for the public weal,
Patch and cobble it, toe and heel!'

VII.

"From ancient days till Time's last hour
Your cobblers have been men of power.
Your Alexander, who was he?
As great a cobbler as could be.
And who your kings of later birth,
The lords and demi-gods of earth?—
Your Tamerlanes, and Ghengis-Khans,
Your Peters, Pauls, and Suleimans?
And great Napoleons, red with gore?
Cobblers! cobblers! nothing more!

VIII.

"And from the very dawn of time,
In every country, age, and clime,
Who were the Solons, Zenos, Dracos?
Who the Stagyrites and Platos?
Who the stoics and the schoolmen,
Hammering words with *brutum fulmen?*

Who the metaphysic spouters,
Dark expounders, drifting doubters?
Great and little—sane ones, mad ones?—
Cobblers all! and very bad ones!

IX.

"And ye who seek to loose and bind,—
Ye great reformers of mankind,—
Who think the soul a mere machine,
That you can trim, and oil, and clean,
And all men's passions—broad as day—
But dust that you can brush away;
Who think you've all the skill and leather
To put a proper shoe together:
You're only cobblers like the rest,—
Bungling cobblers at the best."

X.

Sitting above the mountain-springs,
'Tis thus the ancient Cobbler sings;

You may hear his voice in the winter storm
Ring through the mist that keeps him warm,
When he catches the clouds, you may hear the strain,
As they break from his hoary head in rain.
And when the summer thunders jar
There comes loud chorus from afar:
"All are cobblers—high or low,
"Quoth the Cobbler of Glencroe."

ARROQUHAR, ARGYLESHIRE,
August, 1856.

TELL ME NO MORE.

Tell me no more amid these silent mountains,
  Beneath these green leaves, musical with song,
Lull'd by the whisper of these upland fountains,
  The old unvarying tale of guilt and wrong.

Leave me alone one day, with Nature's beauty,—
  One day—one night—an alien to my care:
The needful rest will nerve my soul to duty,
  And give me strength to struggle and to bear.

If it be true that Love is born to Sorrow,
  That Hope deceives, and Friendship fades away,—
Let the sad wisdom slumber till to-morrow,
  Nor stand between me and this summer-day.

If I am free to dive in Truth's deep ocean,
  I will be free to linger on the shore,
To watch the billows in their wild commotion,
  And hear far off their melancholy roar.

Pearls for the diver battling with the billows!
  Pearls for his mournful pomp, and lonely pride!—
For me, this day, a harp upon the willows,
  And flowers fresh-gather'd by the water's side.

ENGLISH VIRTUES.

I.

THE virtues of old England!
  We'll count them if we can,
And prove to all who doubt us
  What makes the Englishman;
What makes us stand the foremost
  Among the brave and free!
What did our sires in days of old,
  And what in ours will we.

II.

From Agincourt and Cressy,
  To Nile and Inkermann,
We've shown the wondering nations
  What English valour can.

Our foes have felt our courage
  In every clime and sea;
Our fathers stood like solid oak,
  And so, to death, will we.

III.

In times when evil fortune
  Assail'd our country's cause,
Around the throne we rallied,
  Defenders of our laws;
Around the throne and altar,
  And home, the sheltering tree;
Thus did of old our loyal sires,
  And so, true hearts, will we.

IV.

Our ships in ev'ry ocean
  Are messengers of peace;
They carry happy tidings,
  And bid the world increase.

Our traders thrive by honour,
  Their words and bonds agree!
Our fathers wrought for honest gold,
  And won it—so will we.

V.

And in all times and places,
  We cherish woman's worth;
Through all our isles we own her,
  The love—light of the earth;
To youth and age we offer
  Respect and bended knee,
Thus did our sires, and taught their sons,
  And so, true hearts, will we.

VI.

And if we're rich and thriving,
  We'll keep an open door;
If poor ourselves, the poorer
  Shall taste our little store.

The hospitable wine-cup
  Shall circle in our glee;—
Our fathers spread the welcome board,
  And so, true hearts, will we.

VII.

The virtues of Old England!
  We'll prove them if we can!
And show to all who doubt us
  What makes the Englishman;
What makes us stand the foremost
  Among the brave and free!
Thus did our sires in days of old,
  And so, true hearts, will we.

GIDEON GRAY.

I.

GIDEON GRAY—poor Gideon Gray!
He lies in the meadow grass,
And all day long looks up at the clouds,
And watches them as they pass,—
He smiles to them, sings to them, shouting alou
If the little clouds lag behind;
And waves his arms as the oak-tree waves
Its boughs to the summer wind.
And what doth he think? what doth he see
In the darkness and the shade?
His soul is in the outer-dark,—
None knows but the God who made.

II.

Gideon Gray—poor Gideon Gray!
  He sits by the wintry fire,
And watches the live coals in the grate
  With eyes that never tire.
He sings a song to the chirruping flames,
  And balances to and fro
All day long, like the tick o' the clock,
  While the pine-log embers glow.
There is no meaning in his mirth,—
  His tenantless eyes express
Nothing but ignorance of pain,
  And a stone-like happiness.

III.

Gideon Gray—poor Gideon Gray!
  No misery touches him;
He hath no care; the shadow of grief
  Were light to a soul so dim.

Oh! give us grief, 'tis better than this;
  Sorrow on Sorrow's head
Ten times piled, were a lighter load
  Than a happiness so dread.
Come, Sorrow, come! we'll bare our breasts
  To meet thy heaviest blow,
Resigned—if Reason keep her seat
  To guide us as we go.

THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT.

FAIR Streamlet, running
Where violets grow,
Under the elm-trees,
Murmuring low;
Rippling gently
Amid the grass;
I have a fancy,
As I pass:
I have a fancy as I see
The trailing willows kissing thee;
As I behold the daisies pied,
The harebells nodding at thy side;
The sheep that feed upon thy brink,
The birds that stoop to thy wave to drink;
Thy blooms that tempt the bees to stray,
And all the life that tracks thy way.

I deem thou flowest
  Through grassy meads,
To show the beauty
  Of gentle deeds;
To show how happy
  The world might be,
If men, observant,
  Copied thee:
To show how small a stream may pour
Verdure and beauty on either shore;
To teach what humble men might do,
If their lives were pure, and their hearts were true;
And what a wealth they might dispense,
In modest, calm beneficence;
Marking their course, as thou dost thine,
By way-side flowers of love divine.

And, Streamlet, rushing,
  With foam and spray,

Over the boulders
In thy way;
Leaping and rolling
From rock to cave,
A vast impetuous
Onward wave:
I have a fancy as I mark
Thy fall o'er the precipices dark;
As I behold thy power reveal'd,
And hear thy voice, like thunder peal'd;
I have a fancy as I sit
Under the rocks where thy rainbows flit,
And listen to thy roar and swell,
Sonorous, irresistible.

I deem thou leapest
Adown the rocks,
To show how little
Are Fortune's shocks

To him reliant,
Who knows his strength,
And measures evil—
Breadth and length:
I deem thou flowest to teach us still,
That perseverance conquers ill;
That no obstruction small or great,
Can daunt the soul that dares its fate;
That calm, true hearts in peril's hour
Confront it with superior power.
Here at thy side I sit and dream
These fancies twain, sweet Mountain Stream.

CASTLE ATHELSTONE.

I.

THROUGH porch and hall the ivies creep,
In Beauty's bower the wild winds weep,
The raven haunts the turret lone;
Alas for fallen Athelstone!

II.

No more the earls and knights of old,
In pomp and pride of steel and gold,
With nodding plumes and trumpet-tone,
Come down to mighty Athelstone!

III.

No more their sons, the rich and great,
Receive the needy at their gate;
And call the fruitful shire their own:
Their names are lost in Athelstone!

IV.

No more their daughters, fair and proud,
Demand the homage of the crowd;
Their smiles made light where'er they shone:
Their place is dark in Athelstone!

V.

Their last descendant toils for bread,
And mourns the glory that has fled;
In distant lands he dwells unknown,
And sighs for ruin'd Athelstone!

THE HAWTHORN AND THE IVY.

I.

THE Hawthorn bloom'd to the vernal air,
Merry and free in the woodland fair,
Attired in garments nuptial white,
She was a glory to the sight;
Her breath was sweeter than the morn:
A beautiful tree was the wild Hawthorn.

II.

The Ivy rooted by her side,
Woo'd and won her for his bride;
She was fain to be embraced,—
He twined his arms about her waist:
"Oh joy!" said he, "that I was born,
To love this beautiful wild Hawthorn!"

III.

Alas! for this world of grief and pain!
Wed, not mated, were the twain:
She was tender, mild, and true;
He was selfish, through and through,
And waved his leaves to the winds in scorn
Of his blossoming, beautiful, wild Hawthorn.

IV.

She could not drink the dew or shower,
Or feel the warmth of Summer's hour;
The Ivy stood between her heart
And all the life the skies impart:
She pined, she sigh'd, she lived forlorn,
And died in her sorrow—the wild Hawthorn.

THE VOLUNTARY.

THE low, soft notes
Trickled upon each other like the drip
Of rain in summer upon trees and flowers,
And lo! I wander'd knee-deep in the grass,
Through the green meadows prankt with buttercups,
Valerian, daisies, and wild hyacinths.
I heard the rippling murmur of a brook,
Whose limpid waters sparkled to the sun;
Upon its brink a troop of children sat,
Fair boys with chubby cheeks and laughing eyes,
And girls with ringlets waving to the wind;
They braided garlands of the meadow flowers,
And tied them up with rushes. I could hear

Their joyous laughter and their artless talk,—
The song of blackbirds in the neighbouring copse,
The trumpet of the gnat,—the bee's loud horn,—
And click of grasshoppers, like meeting spears.

Anon the organ pour'd a deeper strain,
And carried me away—far, far away—
From the green meadows, miles and miles adown
A lengthening river, widening evermore.
I saw the towns and cities on its banks,—
I heard the pealing of the holiday bells,
And roar of people in the market-place,
The flapping of the sails of merchant ships
Laden with corn, that with each flowing tide
Came upward to the towns; I heard the creak
Of chains and dropping anchors in the ports,
And chorus, at the capstan, of the crews,
As round and round they trod with measured steps,
And all the bustle of their busy life.

And still away—away—in floods of sound,
Th' unseen musician, sitting at his keys,
Transported me, a willing auditor,
Where'er his fancy would. The deep, full tones
Grew deeper, fuller, louder, more sublime,
Until the waves of music swoll to seas,
Whose angry billows, white with crests of foam,
Rush'd in impetuous thunder on the land.
The Moon withdrew her splendour from the clouds,
And hid herself in darkness; the wind rose,
And roar'd in chorus with th' exulting Sea,
Who answer'd it with thunders of her own.
Rain, hail, and sleet, and avalanche of spray
Broke in succession; wind, and sea, and sky,—
Octave on octave—burst in worlds of sound,
The mighty discords clashing evermore,
Only to melt and fuse in harmonies.

Anon the lightning flash'd upon the dark,
And thunders rattled o'er the cloudy vault,

As if the chariots of the heavenly host
Drove to the judgment-seat, and Earth's last day
Were sounded by the trumpets of the spheres.
The echoes roll'd through the cathedral aisles,
And died in silence. Lo! the round, full moon
Peer'd from the bosom of a rifted cloud;
The wind sank low—the raging seas grew calm—
While loud, clear voices, from the upper air,
Sang in sweet harmonies, "The Lord is great,
His loving-kindness lasts for evermore."

MEOPS.

I.

Meops lived; a mighty man;
  Had two castles by the sea,
Parks in half a dozen shires,
  Hill and hollow, croft and lea,
Horses, hounds, and fallow deer,
Fifty thousand pounds a year,
  Lands in mortgage and in fee;
Splendid Meops!—Envy's mark!—
Taper shining through the dark!—
  Mighty man was he!

II.

Meops died—the great and high,—
  Left his castles by the sea;
Left his horses, hounds, and hawks,
  Lands in mortgage and in fee;

Left his flatterers, jesters, fools,
Toadies, parasites, and tools;
Left his wife and children three:
But when mighty Meops died,
Not one living creature sigh'd;
Little man was he!

BEAUTY AND LOVE.

Beauty and Love, and are they not the same?
The one is both—and both are but the one—
Pervasive they of all around the sun;
Of one same essence, differing but in name.
Lo! when pure Love lights his immortal flame,
He, and all Earth and Heaven in Beauty shine;—
And when true Beauty shows her face divine,
ve permeates the universal frame.
ly of holies—mystery sublime!
Who truly loves is beautiful to see,
And scatters Beauty wheresoe'er he goes.
fill all space—they move the wheels of Time;
nd evermore from their dread Unity,
Through all the firmaments, Life's ocean flows.

LOVE; NEW AND OLD.

I.

And were they not the happy days,
When Love and I were young,
When Earth was robed in Heavenly light,
And all creation sung?
When gazing in my true love's face,
Through greenwood alleys lone,
I guess'd the secrets of her heart,
By whispers of mine own?

II.

And are they not the happy days,
When Love and I are old,
And silver Evening has replaced,
A Morn and Noon of gold?

LOVE; NEW AND OLD. P. 123.

Love stood alone mid youthful joy,
  But now by Sorrow tried,
It sits, and calmly looks to Heaven,
  With angels at its side.

FAIREST AND DEAREST.

I.

Who shall be fairest?
Who shall be rarest?
Who shall be first in the songs that we sing?
She who is kindest,
When Fortune is blindest,
Bearing through winter the blooms of the spring;
Charm of our gladness,
Friend of our sadness
Angel of Life, when its pleasures take wing!
She shall be fairest,
She shall be rarest,
She shall be first in the songs that we sing!

II.

Who shall be nearest,
Noblest, and dearest,
Named but with honour and pride evermore?
He, the undaunted,
Whose banner is planted
On Glory's high ramparts and battlements hoar;
Fearless of danger,
To falsehood a stranger,
Looking not back while there's Duty before!
He shall be nearest,
He shall be dearest,
He shall be first in our hearts evermore!

THE MOUNTAIN-TOP.

Poor is the man, however great his wealth,
To whom the sunshine yields no mental health;
To whom the music of the early birds
Can bring no solace sweet as spoken words;
To whom the torrent, with its ceaseless hymn,
The streamlet wending through the copses dim,
The upland lake, reflecting moon and star,
Or mighty ocean gleaming from afar;
The roar of branches in the wintry woods,
The solemn diapason of the floods,
All sights and sounds in Nature's varied range,
Lovely in all and good in every change,

Can bring no charm serene, no joy refined,
To please his heart or elevate his mind.

But rich is he, however scant of gold,
Who, in despite of sorrows manifold,
Can find a joy at morn or eventide,
And fresh instruction on the mountain-side;
Who loves the wisdom which the woodland yields,
And all the dewy beauty of the fields.
Welcome to him, with a companion fit,
Th' umbrageous depths where noonday chequers flit,
The shady path, the voice of brawling streams,
The silent pool where sunlight never beams,
The snowy summits of the Alpine peak,
The hopeful splendour on the morning's cheek,
The glow of noon, the evening's tender light,
And all the placid majesty of night,
The peace and joy, the hope and love that dwell
In Nature's eyes, for those who love her well.

Up to the mountain!—ere the morn be late,
And farewell Wisdom, in her robes of state;
We'll bid her welcome, with her travelling suit,
Her ashen staff, her knapsack, and her flute!
Up to the mountain!—to the very cope!—
Over the moorlands—up the breezy slope;—
Or down in dells, beside the rippling brooks
In their green furrows—through the loveliest nooks—
To their top fountains, whence, meandering slow,
They bound in beauty to the vales below!
Up to the mountain, in the air and sun,
For health and pleasure to be woo'd and won!

How cheerily the voices of the morn
Rise as we go! The lark has left the corn,
And sings her glad hosannas to the day;
The blackbird trolls his rich notes far away;
While, from th' awaken'd homestead far adown,
Come floating up the murmurs of the town.

Hark to the day's shrill trumpeter, the cock—
The bark of hounds—the bleating of the flock—
The lowing of the milk-o'erburden'd kine—
And laugh of children; sweetest music mine.

Upwards, still up!—and all these sounds expire
In the faint distance, save that, mounting higher,
We still can hear, descending from the cloud,
The lark's triumphal anthem, long and loud.
Or far away, a wanderer from the bowers,
Rifling for sweets the now infrequent flowers,
A solitary bee goes buzzing by,
With livery coat, and bundle at his thigh;
With honest music, telling all that will,
How great a worker rambles on the hill.

A streamlet gushes on the mountain-side,
It yields a draught to men of sloth denied;
Unknown to all who love the easy street
Better than crags where cloud and mountain meet,—

Unprized, untasted in the plodding town,
Where limbs grow rusty upon beds of down.
Let no man say he has outlived delight,
Who has not climb'd the mountain's topmost height,
And found far up, when faint with toil and heat,
A little fountain oozing at his feet,
And laid him down upon the grass or stones,
At his full length, to rest his weary bones,
And drink long draughts at the delicious spring,
Better than wine at banquet of a king:
And when refresh'd, and grateful for the gift,
To fill his pocket-flask with prudent thrift,
Then bathe his hands and face, and start again
With keener pleasure, purchased by a pain.

Upwards, still upwards, lies the arduous way;
But not still upward must our vision stray;—
In climbing hills, as in our life, we find
True Wisdom stops at times, and looks behind—

tops to survey the progress she has made,
'he sunny levels and the flowery shade,
)r difficulties pass'd. Thus, as we go,
Ve pause to view the loveliness below,—
)r note the landscape widening as we climb,
ïew at each turn, and variously sublime.

How bountiful and kind is Heaven to man!
hat ceaseless love pervades the wondrous plan!
h sense, each faculty, and each desire,
hose who humbly hope while they aspire,
perpetual source of secret joy,
ason prompt and hallow its employ;
ll God's noblest gifts are most profuse,
nplest joys grow exquisite by use.
see the landscape smiling fair,
delight that seems too great to bear;
urn from man's to nature's face,
pleasure that I cannot trace;

I never hear the tempest in the trees,
Without mysterious throbs of sympathies;
I never hear the billows on the shore,
Without a secret impulse to adore;
Nor stand, as now upon the quiet hills,
Without a mild religious awe, that fills
My soul with raptures I cannot express,—
Raptures, not peace—a joy, not happiness.

MIST.

One day I walk'd through mist and haze of cloud;
  I could not see the sunshine in the sky;
I heard a mountain torrent pealing loud,
  But could not see it, though I knew 'twas nigh;
I wander'd on the sullen ocean-shore,
  But could not see the wrinkles on its face,
And only knew 'twas ocean by its roar,
  So dense the vapour lay on all the place.
Heavily on hill and plain
Hung moisture, neither dew nor rain;
The birds were silent in the darkling bowers,
And not a shadow fell to mark the hours;
Ghost-like paced about the men,
  Through ghostly alleys, speaking low;
And every object on my ken
  Was vague, and colourless, and slow.

I ask'd a native what the land might be.
"The land," he said, "of heavenly Poesy."
"And who are these that wander up and down?"
"Poets," he said, "of great and high renown."
"And art thou of them?" "No—not so," he sigh'd;
"I'm but a critic." "Tell me," I replied,
"What kind of poesy these poets make.
If they be makers, as true poets are,
And whether from the clouds their hue they take,
And sing without the light of sun or star."
"We want no sunshine here," the critic said,
"Nor wholesome light, nor shape too well defined;
There needs no radiance for the drowsy head,
Nor vulgar common sense for sleepy mind.
Our nerves are very finely strung,
And much emotion would destroy them quite;
And if a meaning start to page or tongue
Of our great poets, when they speak or write,
They swathe and swaddle it in pompous rhyme,
And darken counsel with vain words;

And girls, green-sickly, children of the clime,
  Proclaim it lovely as the chant of birds,
And write it in their albums, or rehearse,
  With lisping chatter, the delightful verse.
Sickly—sickly are our bards;—
  The rose-tree gall is surely fair,
Ay, fairer to our faint and dim regards
  Than healthy roses flaunting in the air.
Most lovely is our daily languishment,
  Our sweet half-consciousness, our listless ease,
Our inchoate discourse magniloquent,
  Through which we see the surging mysteries
Of Time and Life, Eternity and Death;
  Or think we see them; is it not the same?
Death is a mist, and Life is but a breath,
  And Love a cloudy, ever-flickering flame."
"Then," I rejoin'd, "the poets of this land,
Misty and mystic, hard to understand,
Do not desire, like Shakspeare of old days,
To reach the popular heart through open ways;

To speak for all men; to be wise and true,
Bright as the noon-time, clear as morning dew,
And wholesome in the spirit and the form?"
"Shakspeare!" he answer'd, "may his name endure!
But what is he to us? Our veins are warm
With other blood than his, perchance as pure.
Each for his time!—our time is one of mist,
And we are misty,—love us those who list."
He said, and disappear'd; and I took ship,
And left that cloudy land; and sailing forth,
I felt the free breeze sporting at my lip,
And saw the Pole-star in the clear blue North,
And all the pomp of Heaven. Right glad was I,
Bareheaded to the glory of the sky.

CRACKLETHORN.

"For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity."—Ecclesiastes.

THROUGH a great and a mighty city
  I roam'd like one forlorn;
Through the city, amid the people,
  In the land of Cracklethorn.
I heard the sorry jesters,—
  The dismal songs they sang,
The crack of their witless laughter,
  Their loud, incessant slang.
At the holiest and the highest
  They launch'd the wordy dart;
They sneer'd at manly honour,
  They scoff'd at woman's heart.

To speak for all men; to be wise and true,
Bright as the noon-time, clear as morning dew,
And wholesome in the spirit and the form?"
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I roam'd like one forlorn;
Through the city, amid the people,
In the land of Cracklethorn.
I heard the sorry jesters,—
The dismal songs they sang,
The crack of their witless laughter,
Their loud, incessant slang.
At the holiest and the highest
They launch'd the wordy dart;
They sneer'd at manly honour,
They scoff'd at woman's heart.

They gibed and mock'd at Virtue,
  They ridiculed the truth,
Till their old men grinn'd like monkeys,
  And a blight came o'er their youth.
To be great, or wise, or lofty,
  Was to earn their giggling scorn.
"Come plague, and famine, or fire from Heaven,"
  I said, like one forlorn,—
"Come plague, and famine, and fire from Heaven,
  And fall on Cracklethorn!"

THE EGLANTINE.

I.

MODEST Brier! odour shedding,
  Down the lanes to cottage-doors;
Morn herself, if failing sweetness,
  Might replenish from thy stores.
Charm of wild woods! humbly virtuous;
  Heedless thou to flaunt or shine;—
Rich men praise thee, poor men bless thee
  Shy but lovely Eglantine!

II.

Clad in garments white as lilies,
  Newly wash'd by April's tears,
Scattering smiles like sunshine round her,
  Lo! my love, my queen, appears.

Fragrant Brier! like the maiden
  Fair, but prizing virtue best;
Freshly gather'd, love inviting,
  Go and bloom upon her breast!

THE MEN OF THE NORTH.

I.

FIERCE as its sunlight, the East may be proud
Of its gay gaudy hues and its sky without cloud;
Mild as its breezes, the beautiful West
May smile like the valleys that dimple its breast;
The South may rejoice in the vine and the palm,
In its groves, where the midnight is sleepy with balm:
Fair though they be,
There's an isle in the sea,
The home of the brave and the boast of the free!
Hear it, ye lands! let the shout echo forth,—
The lords of the world are the Men of the North!

II.

Cold though our seasons, and dull though our skies,
There's a might in our arms and a fire in our eyes;
Dauntless and patient, to dare and to do,—
Our watchword is "Duty," our maxim is "Through!"
Winter and storm only nerve us the more,
And chill not the heart, if they creep through the door:
Strong shall we be
In our isle of the sea,
The home of the brave and the boast of the free!
Firm as the rock when the storm flashes forth,
We'll stand in our courage—the Men of the North!

III.

Sunbeams that ripen the olive and vine,
In the face of the slave and the coward may shine;
Roses may blossom where Freedom decays,
And crime be a growth of the Sun's brightest rays.

Scant though the harvest we reap from the soil,
Yet Virtue and Health are the children of Toil:
Proud let us be
Of our isle of the sea,
The home of the brave and the boast of the free:
Men with true hearts—let our fame echo forth—
Oh, these are the fruit that we grow in the North!

THE TREES.

I.

If you could dance when Orpheus piped,
  Ye oaks, and elms, and beeches,
Try, when a man of modern time
  Your courtesy beseeches.
'Twas but his fancy! Well, 'tis mine,—
  So do your best endeavour:
The facts of History pass away,
  The thoughts may live for ever.

II.

My friend the merchant of Cornhill,
  Awake to nought but scheming,
And he who plods in Fig-tree Court,
  Will call this idle dreaming.

But ye shall dance, ye joyous trees,
  Though they may scoff or pity;
And measure, in their self-conceit,
  Arcadia by the City.

III.

Come, Father Oak, so old and staid,
  But vigorous and hearty,
Shake off the soberness of years,
  And join the merry party.
'Tis not becoming? Harmless mirth
  Takes no account of ages,—
So, Monarch of the Woods, unbend,
  And frolic with your pages!

IV.

And thou, superbest matron Beech,
  In all thy bloom of beauty,
Relax; and learn that, now and then,
  Enjoyment is a duty.

And Lady Lime, the honey sweet,
  With music in thy tresses,
Step out,—the wild winds pipe the tune,
  And every moment presses.

V.

Ye damsel Birches, slim and fair,
  And capersome as misses
Who've just come home from boarding-school,
  And dream of love and kisses,
I know you're ready: come away,
  With silver-braided kyrtles,
And taper limbs, and flowing hair,
  And breath as sweet as myrtles.

VI.

Ye Firs and Larches, rough as lads
  Let loose from School or College;
Ye Poplars, stiff as men on 'Change,
  Forget your cram of knowledge.

You're no such beauties of yourselves,
  But every tree an aid is,—
And you'll improve in elegance,
  By contact with the ladies.

VII.

Ye steadfast Elms, our English trees,
  The charm of rural alleys,
The grace of parks and village-greens,
  And darlings of our valleys:
Come forth, with robes of flowing green,
  The ivy for your flounces,—
The dance will languish in the dale,
  If one of you renounces.

VIII.

And you, like melancholy maids
  Who sigh on lonely pillows,
Or widows, ere they've cast their weeds,—
  Ye fond, romantic Willows,

Come from your looking-glass, the stream,
  And cease to play at Sorrow,
And taste a little Joy to-day,
  To think about to-morrow.

IX.

And thou, dear Hawthorn,—sweetest sweet,
  The beautiful, the tender,
Bright with the fondling of the sun,
  And prankt in bridal splendour,—
Come with thy sisters, full of bloom,
  And all thy bridemaids merry,—
Acacia, Chestnut, Lilac fair,
  The Apple, and the Cherry.

X.

Strike up the music! Lo! it sounds!
  The expectant woodlands listen;
They wave their branches to the sky,
  And all their dew-drops glisten.

There comes a rustling from the heights,
  A buzzing from the hollow,
They move, the ancient Oaks and Elms,
  And all the juniors follow.

XI.

They move, they start, they thrill, they dance,
  They shake their boughs with pleasure,
And flutter all their gay green leaves,
  Obedient to the measure.
They choose their partners: Oak and Beech
  Pair off, a stately couple;
And Larch to Willow makes his bow,
  Th' unbending to the supple.

XII.

The Hawthorn, charm of every eye,
  In Beauty's ranks a leader,
Has choice of many for her hand,
  But gives it to the Cedar.

She loves the wisdom of his looks,
And name renown'd in story;
And he, th' effulgence of her eyes,
And fragrance of her glory.

XIII.

The Poplar, very gaunt and tall,
Says to the Ash: "May I press
Thy fairy figure in the waltz?
If not, I'll ask the Cypress."
And Ash consents,—but thinks her beau
Has nothing that entices;
He looks so like a serving-man,
To hand about the ices.

XIV.

The Elms and Lindens choose their mates,
And e'en the sturdy Holly;
And all the Brambles and the Ferns
Think standing still is folly,

And foot it briskly on the sward,
  As wild as lads and lasses,—
But make sad havoc, as they twirl,
  With all the flowers and grasses.

XV.

Come here, thou man of Lloyd's and 'Change,
  Come here, thou grave decider,
Who splittest straws in Fig-tree Court,—
  Come here, thou money'd spider,
Who lendest cash at cent. per cent.,
  And see our woodland pastime!—
If once you see it, I'll be sworn
  It will not be the last time.

XVI.

You cannot see it? Never will,
  'Twas waste of breath to ask you:
To look an inch before your nose,
  Would sorely be to task you.

Come thou, sweet Lady of my heart!
My other self, and dearest:
If there be music in the woods,
Come, tell me if thou hearest.

XVII.

If there be spirits in the trees,
Thine eyes, with inward lustre
Caught from the fountains of thy soul,
Will see them as they cluster.
Thou hearest—seest! Oh! my love,
Thy sympathy enhances
All joys I feel, and turns to truths
My shadows of romances.

XVIII.

Take root again, ye docile Trees,
No longer leap and jostle;
There's other music in the boughs,—
The Cuckoo and the Throstle.

The breeze has dropped, the air is still,
  The long grass sleeps in quiet;
And dancing, in an hour so calm,
  Seems weariness and riot.

XIX.

Besides, the fitful mood has changed,
  Gone back to times Elysian,
When those who sat beneath the trees
  Could see a brighter vision.
We'll see it too. Come, potent witch,
  And do as thou art bidden!
Come, Fancy! touch those wrinkled barks,
  And show what they have hidden!

XX.

The west wind roaming through the woods,
  With briery odours laden,
Breathes gently, as from every tree
  Out steps a spirit maiden,—

Th' immortal Dryads,—old as Greece
But youthful as this minute,
And lovely as the loveliest thing
That moves and sparkles in it!

XXI.

Barefooted, in their robes of green,
Blue-eyed, with tresses golden,
By none but those whom Fancy loves,
In all their pomp beholden;
We see them on the sunny slope,
And, credulous as childhood,
Love, for their sakes, each teeming tree
That blossoms in the wild wood.

XXII.

Oh! richer far, than he who owns
This forest, root and branches,
And calculates how much 'twill yield
For houses and ship-launches,—

Whose trees are timber, nothing more,—
  We own, if we enjoy it;
And this great property of ours,
  We dare him to destroy it.

XXIII.

Ours is the forest—ours the land—
  And ours the great sky-ocean,
Through which their ships can never sail,
  Whose pelf is their devotion.
Leave us our dreams, ye men of facts,
  Who shake your heads profoundly,
And tell us if ye're half as glad,
  Or if ye sleep as soundly!

THE SONG OF THALIESSIN.

I HAVE a people of my own,
  And great or small, whate'er they be,
'Tis Harp and Harper, touch and tone—
  There's music between them and me.

And let none say, when low in death
  The soul-inspiring minstrel lies,
That I misused my hand or breath,
  For favour in my people's eyes.

Whate'er my faults as mortal man,
  Let foes revive them if they must!
And yet a grave is ample span
  To hide their memory with my dust.

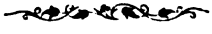
But give, oh! give me what I claim,
  The Harper's meed, the Minstrel's crown;
I never sang for sake of Fame,
  Or clutch'd at baubles of renown.

I spoke my thought, I sang my song,
  Because I pitied, felt, and knew:
I never glorified a wrong,
  Or sang approval of th' untrue.

And if I touch'd the people's heart,
  Is that a crime in true men's eyes,
Or desecration of an art
  That speaks to human sympathies?

As man, let men my worth deny;
  As Harper, by my harp I stand,
And dare the Future to deny
  The might that quiver'd from my hand.

A King of Bards, though scorn'd and poor,
  I feel the crown upon my head,
And Time shall but the more secure,
  My right to wear it.—I have said.



ANGLING.

Flow, river, flow!
Where the alders grow,—
Where the mosses rest
On the bank's high breast:
Flow on, and make sweet music ever,
Thou joyous and beloved river.

Such peace upon the landscape broods,
There is such beauty in the woods;
Such notes of joy come from the copse,
And from the swinging oak-tree tops;

There are such sounds of life, and health, and pleasure
  Abroad upon the breeze,
And on the river rippling at sweet leisure,
  Beneath its banks of fringing trees,—
That to my mind a thought of death or pain
Seems a discordant note in heavenly strain.

Death is the rule of life: the hawk in air
Pursues the swallow for his daily fare;
The blackbird and the linnet rove
On a death-errand through the grove;
The happy slug and glow-worm pale,
Must die to feed the nightingale;
The mighty lion hunts his destined prey;
And the small insect, fluttering on our way,
Devours the tinier tribes that live unseen
In shady nooks and populous forests green;
The hungry fish, in seas and rivers,
Are death-receivers and death-givers;

And animalculæ conceal'd from sight,
In littleness sublime and infinite,
That whirl in drops of water from the fen,—
Creatures as quarrelsome as men,—
Or float in air upon invisible wings,
Devour the countless hosts of smaller things.
But simple is the law which they obey—
They never torture when they slay,
Unconquerable need, the law of life,
Impels the fiercest to the fatal strife:
They feel no joy in stopping meaner breath,
'Tis man alone that makes a sport of death.

So, gentle river, flow,
Where the green alders grow,
Where the pine-tree rears its crest,
And the stock-dove builds her nest,
Where the wild-flow'r odours float,
And the lark with gushing throat

Pours out her rapturous strains
To all the hills and plains;
And if, amid the stream,
The lurking angler dream
Of hooking fishes with his treacherous flies,
Reflect, oh river, the unclouded skies,
And bear no windy ripple on thy breast,—
The cloud and ripple he loves best,—
So that the innocent fish may see,
And shun their biped enemy.

Flow, river, flow,
Where the violets grow,
Where the bank is steep,
And the mosses sleep,
And the green trees nod to thy waves below:
Flow on and make sweet music ever,
Thou joyous and beloved river!

CARELESS.

Spring gave me a friend, and a true, true love;—
  The summer went caroling by,
And the autumn brown'd, and the winter frown'd,
  And I sat me down to sigh:
My friend was false for the sake of gold,
  Ere the farmer stack'd his rye;
And my true love changed with the fickle west wind,
  Ere winter dull'd the sky:
But the bees are humming—a new spring's coming,
  And none the worse am I.

JOAN OF ARC.

Th' old Norman city, with its towers and spir
And gorgeous architecture, was to me
The shrine of one great name; where'er I wen
That memory followed me. From church to ch
From the cathedral where King Richard sleeps
To St. Ouen and beautiful Maclou—
From bridge to market-place, and justice-hall,
A mighty spirit kept me company.
Through quaint old streets, whose every win
seem'd
Old as the days when haughty Bedford held
His martial court in Rouen, wander'd I;
And still thy memory, hapless Joan of Arc,
Wander'd beside me. "Here," I said, "poor n
Thou wert led captive, after saving France!

JOAN OF ARC. P. 170.

Iere thou wert gibed and scorn'd by brutal men.
Iere, from their windows, peep'd the gaping crowd,
'o see thee made a shameful spectacle.
Iere Superstition, pandering to Revenge,
Accused thee of all vile and senseless crimes.
Iere, at their harsh tribunal, thy good deeds
Vere each interpreted in evil sense;
'hy love of country in their eyes became
'reason most foul; thy courage, lunacy;
'hy fortune, witchcraft; thy young purity,
An outward mask to hide the shame within.
And here, unhappy saviour of a realm,
'h' ungenerous foemen, smitten by the steel
)f warriors roused to battle by thy voice,
Iated unmanly vengeance on thy head,
And slew, by cruel fire and torturing pangs,
'he helpless woman they could not subdue.
Rouen is sacred to thy memory;
'he ancient city is thy monument;
'here's not a spire or tower within its bound,

But pleads for justice to thy slander'd name.
Thou hast it, Spirit! Compensating Time
Has done thee justice, as it does to all,
However hated, injured, or malign'd.
The truly great and good have constant friends;
The rolling centuries, in their behalf,
Sue for reversal of th' unjust decree
That doom'd their names to infamy and scorn.
They never sue in vain; and thine, sad maid!
Shines like a gem upon the brow of France—
A pearl of beauty on her queenly crown!

ROUEN, 1847.

STORM APPROACHING.

I.

We live in a time of sorrow,
  A time of doubt and storm,
When the thunder-clouds hang heavy,
  And the air is thick and warm;
When the far-off lightnings gather
  On the verge of the darkening sky,
And the birds of the air, fear-stricken,
  To nest and cover fly:
Look up! ye drowsy people,
  There's desolation nigh.

II.

Look up! ye drowsy people,
  And shield yourselves in time,

From the wrath and retribution
  That track the heels of crime;
That lie in wait for the folly
  Of the lordly and the strong;
That spare nor high nor lowly
  From vengeance threaten'd long,—
But strike at the heart of nations,
  And kings who govern wrong.

III.

Kneel down in the dust and ashes!
  Kneel down, ye high and great,
Who call yourselves the bulwarks
  Or fathers of the State,
And clear your sleepy vision
  From selfishness and scorn,
And mingle with the people,
  To learn what they have borne,—
Their suffering and their sadness,
  Toiling forlorn, forlorn!

IV.

Kneel down in the dust and sackcloth,
  And own, with contrite tears,
Your arrogant self-worship,
  And wrongs of many years;
Your luxuries hard-hearted;
  Your pride so barren-cold,
Remote from the warmth of pity
  For men of the self-same mould,
As good as yourselves, or better,
  In all but the shiny gold.

V.

Kneel down, ye priests and preachers,
  Ye men of lawn and stole,
Who call yourselves physicians
  And guardians of the soul,—
And own if ye have not hated
  Your brethren, night and day,

Because at God's high altars
They bent another way,
And sought not your assistance
To worship and to pray.

VI.

Kneel down in the dust, confessing
Ye've preach'd the truth of God,
When your feet were swift for malice,
And in evil pathways trod;
That ye've loved the flesh, and flesh-pots,
Above the creed you taught;
And, at wealth and pomp aspiring,
Have clutch'd them, passion-fraught:
Ye hypocrites unholy,
Who hold religion nought!

VII.

Kneel down—low down—ye traders,
Ye men of mines and mills,—

With your ships on every ocean,
  And beeves on a thousand hills;
With factories and workshops,
  And stalls in every mart;
Who serve the great god Mammon
  With singleness of heart,
And give him soul and body,
  Till soul and body part;

VIII.

Who talk of your faith and credit,
  And honour clear of stain;—
And own if ye have not cheated
  And lied for the sake of gain;
If ye have not done, in secret,
  Worse things than the wretch who steals
Your 'kerchief from your pocket,—
  But which no tongue reveals,
To shame you in the market
  Where barefaced Commerce deals.

IX.

Kneel down, and own, soul-humbled,
  Ye traders of the street,
If ye have not drugg'd the potion,
  Or the bread that poor men eat;
If ye have not dealt false measure,
  Or ground your workmen down,
Or crush'd their wives and daughters
  Into the hideous town:
Then gone to Church or Chapel,
  In your drab and brown.

X.

And you, ye toiling millions,
  Meek herd and flock of men!
That swink, and sweat, and suffer,
  For three-score years and ten,—
Kneel down, in self-abasement,
  And ask yourselves, each one,

If ye grow no evil passions,
  To shade you from the sun,—
Or sit in chains, lamenting,
  When ye might rise and run.

XI.

Ask if ye do not grovel
  To things yourselves have made,—
To the Lords of Many-Acres,
  To the Money-Grubs of Trade;
Ask if ye do not wallow
  Unseemly in the mire,
With brawls and feuds unmanly,
  In the filth of low desire:
Gin-sodden'd and degraded,
  Drinking avenging fire.

XII.

And ask yourselves, ye lowly
  And reverential poor,

Who go to Church on Sundays,
  With downcast looks demure,—
If never at God's altars,
  With baseless prayers and sighs,
Ye have not gazed at riches
  With fierce, exulting eyes,
And said, "This world's rejected
  Shall grasp you in the skies."

XIII.

Ask if when lordly fortune
  Went whirling past your door,
Ye felt not bitter envy
  Burn at your heart's deep core,
Or whisper you to patience
  With promises of Heaven,
Where the poor, in regal garments
  As white as snow new-driven,
Should look from their thrones at Dives
  In hell-fire unforgiven.

XIV.

Ask if sincere obedience
  To God's Almighty will
Have taught you how to suffer
  The burthen of your ill;
And if no sordid barter
  Of this world for the next,
Or thought of the rich man groaning,
  At the needle's eye perplex'd,
Inspired your resignation
  When ye heard the holy text.

XV.

And you, ye lords and rulers,
  And magnates of the realm,
Who scent impending danger
  That looms to overwhelm,—
Have ye not, basely sleeping
  In apathy and rust,

Been cowards to your duty,
  Betray'd your solemn trust,
And given to-morrow's birthright
  For the morning's crust?

XVI.

Sunk in the Sloughs of Faction,
  Obtuse, and blind, and dumb,
Have ye not sold the safety
  Of ages yet to come,
For triumphs over rivals
  Who sought to cast you out,
For paltry ease and quiet,
  Or the crowd's ignoble shout;—
Or laugh'd at degradation
  Though it hemm'd you round about?

XVII.

Awake! awake! ye sleepers,
  There's danger over all,

When the strong shall be sorely shaken,
  And the weak shall go to the wall;
When towers on the hill-top standing
  Shall topple at a word,
And the principles of ages
  Shall be question'd with the sword,
And the heart's blood of the nations
  Like fountains shall be pour'd.

XVIII.

When a fierce and a searching Spirit
  Shall stalk o'er the startled earth,
And make great Thrones the playthings
  Of his madness or his mirth;
When ancient creeds and systems,
  In the fury of his breath,
Shall whirl like the leaves of Autumn,
  When the north wind belloweth,—
And drift away unheeded,
  To the deep, deep seas of death.

XIX.

The first large rain-drops patter,
  The low wind moans and sings,—
Awake, ere the tempest gather,
  Rulers, and priests, and kings!
Ere the thunder-clouds are open'd,
  That wall and flank the sky;
Ere the whirlwind leaves its caverns,
  And the shafts of vengeance fly,—
Look up! ye drowsy people,
  There's desolation nigh!

September, 1856.

THE RAPID STREAM.

I.

Oh streamlet swiftly flowing,
Down through the corn-fields going,
Stay thy course with me;
For us the skylarks sing,
For us awakes the Spring;
There's time to spare, the earth is fair;
Why hurry to the sea?

II.

The sky is bright above thee,
Silvery branches love thee,
Bending to the reeds;
No mill with busy wheel,
Or ship with ploughing keel,
With sad unrest disturbs thy breast,
Amid thy flowery meads.

III.

Ambition's voice may woo thee,
Glory and gold may sue thee;
All are empty breath;
The end is still the same,
And Power and Wealth and Fame
But run at last, through deserts vast,
To swell the sea of Death.

IV.

Then why, without enjoying
Pleasures around us toying,
Pass our rapid day?
Our cares will come full soon,
Beneath the icy moon,
And we'll behold the ocean cold;—
Let's linger while we may.

THE SAILOR'S WIFE.—PART. I.

I.

I'VE a letter from thy sire,
Baby mine, Baby mine!
I can read and never tire,
Baby mine!
He is sailing o'er the sea—
He is coming back to thee,
He is coming home to me,
Baby mine!

II.

He's been parted from us long
Baby mine, Baby mine!
But if hearts be true and strong,
Baby mine!

They shall brave Misfortune's blast,
And be overpaid at last
For all pain and sorrow pass'd,
Baby mine!

III.

Oh, I long to see his face,
Baby mine, Baby mine!
In his old accustom'd place,
Baby mine!
Like the rose of May in bloom,
Like a star amid the gloom,
Like the sunshine in the room,
Baby mine!

IV.

Thou wilt see him and rejoice,
Baby mine, Baby mine!
Thou wilt know him by his voice,
Baby mine!

By his love-looks that endear,
By his laughter ringing clear,
By his eyes that know not fear,
Baby mine!

V.

I'm so glad—I cannot sleep,
Baby mine, Baby mine!
I'm so happy—I could weep,
Baby mine!
He is sailing o'er the sea,
He is coming home to me,
He is coming back to thee,
Baby mine!

THE SAILOR'S WIFE.—Part. II.

I.

O'er the blue ocean gleaming
She sees a distant ship,
As small to view
As the white sea-mew,
Whose wings in the billows dip.
"Blow favouring gales, in her answering sails!
Blow steadily and free!
Rejoicing, strong,
Singing a song,
Her rigging and her spars among,
And waft the vessel in pride along,
That bears my love to me."

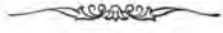
II.

Nearer—still nearer driving,
The white sails grow and swell;
Clear to her eyes
The pennant flies,
And the flag she knows so well.
"Blow favouring gales, in her answering sails!
Waft him, oh gentle sea!
And still, oh heart!
Thy fluttering start!
Why throb and beat as thou wouldst part,
When all so happy and bless'd thou art?
He comes again to thee!"

III.

The swift ship drops her anchor—
A boat puts off for shore—
Against its prow
The ripples flow,
To the music of the oar.

"And art thou here, mine own, my dear,
Safe from the perilous sea?—
Safe, safe at home,
No more to roam!
Blow, tempests blow—my love has come;
And sprinkle the clouds with your dashing foam!
He shall part no more from me!"



EACH BLOCK OF MARBLE IN THE MINE.

I.

EACH block of marble in the mine
  Conceals the Paphian queen,
Apollo robed in light divine,
  And Pallas the serene:
It only needs the lofty thought
  To give the glories birth;
And, lo! by skilful fingers wrought,
  They captivate the earth.

II.

So in the hardest human heart
  One little well appears,
A fountain in some hidden part,
  That brims with gentle tears:

It only needs the master-touch
  Of Love's or Pity's hand,
And, lo! the rock with water bursts
  And gushes o'er the land.

THE SILENT HILLS.

WANDERING 'mid the silent hills,
Sitting by the lonely rills,
And meditating as I go
On human happiness and woe,
Fancies strange unbidden rise
And flit before my placid eyes:
Dreaminesses, sometimes dim
As is the moon's o'erclouded rim;
And sometimes clear as visions are
When the sleeping soul sees deep and far,
Yet cannot, when it wakes, recall,
For the senses' and the reason's thrall.

I love, in idle moods like these,
To sit beneath the shade of trees
In idle and luxurious ease;

Or lie amid the fern and grass,
And talk with shepherds as they pass:
To learn their humble hopes and fears,
And the small changes of their years.

And if no shepherd saunters by,
I can talk with the clouds of the sky,
And watch them from my couch of fern,
As, Proteus-like, they change and turn,—
Now castles grey, with golden doors,
Gem roofs, and amethystine floors;
Now melting into billowy flakes,
Sky islands, or aërial lakes;
Or mimicking the form and show
Of the huge mountains far below.

And sometimes—vagrant, wild, and free—
I look upon the grass and tree,
With an all-pervading sympathy,

And bid them tell if life like theirs
Is void of feeling, joys, and cares.
And ever an answer seems to breathe
From the branches above, and the sward beneath,
And the tree says, "Many a joy is mine,—
In the winter cloud, and the summer shine;
With the daily heat, and the nightly dew,
My strength and pleasure I renew.
I sleep at eve when the skies grow dark,
And wake at the singing of the lark.
And when the winter is crisp and cold,
My life retreats beneath the mould,
And waits in the warmth for the spring-time rain,
To summon the sap to my boughs again.
I feel like you the balmy air,
And am grateful for a life so fair."
And the grass, and the fern, and the waving reeds,
And the wild flowers, and the nameless weeds,
Reply in a low, soft tone of song
That creeps like an infant breeze along:

"We live;—and every life that's given
Receives a joy from bounteous Heaven,
In the reproduction of its kind,
In the warmth, and the light, and the dew, and
the wind."

Deem me not idle if I stray,
Oh! sons of care, for awhile away
From the crowded marts of busy men,
To the wild woods and the lonely glen,
And give my thoughts a holiday.
You cannot tell the work I do,
When I lie dreaming beneath the blue;
Or how these fancies dim and strange,
May amalgamate and change,
Or grow like seeds in aftertime,
To something better than my rhyme.

A WELCOME TO PEACE.

(Music by F. Mori.)

I.

Join, nations, join your hands,
Through all your happy lands,—
And let the church-bells ring,
And youths and maidens sing:
The seraph Peace from Heaven descends
To bid mankind be friends,—
Lo! she comes!
Beat the drums,
And let the banners wave o'er land and sea!
And harmless cannon roar
From furthest shore to shore,—
That Strife and all its brood have ceased to be!
Join your hands,
All ye lands,
And welcome Peace! the beautiful! the free!

II.

No longer may the car
Of blind, infuriate War,
Drive o'er the bleeding Earth,
To quench its children's mirth,
And scatter Vengeance and Dismay,—
But Peace, like flowery May,
Spread around,
O'er the ground,
The seeds of Joy, to blossom like a tree:
The fruits of Plenty's horn,—
The oil, the wine, the corn;
And nobler blessings destined yet to be;—
Join your hands,
All ye lands,
And welcome Peace! the beautiful! the free!

PENDRAGON THE KING.

I.

Of all the bold Britons Pendragon was lord,
His joy was in battles, his trust was the sword;
With his spears on the land, and his ships on the main,
He drove out the Saxon, he routed the Dane,
Great Pendragon the King!
Said the Britons, "We'll ne'er see a monarch again,
Like Pendragon the King!"

II.

The plague, but the pride of his people was he;
They fawn'd at his footstool, and thought they were free;

If any gainsay'd him, he hung them on high;
He tax'd them, and robb'd them,—but who could deny
Great Pendragon the King?
His word was the law,—there were none to reply
To Pendragon the King!

III.

He died,—yet the sun shone as bright as before,
And kiss'd the rose-tree at the cottager's door:
Neither smith at the anvil, nor child at its play,
Nor churl at the plough, was sad-hearted that day,
For Pendragon the King!
He is gone; let him rest,—why should pleasure delay
For Pendragon the King?

IV.

So runs the big world with the biggest of men:
We are mighty, no doubt, with the sword or the pen,

But we fall like the leaves when the autumn is cold,
And sleep in our place in the sheltering mould,
Like Pendragon the King!
And the day follows night just the same as of old,
And the summer, the spring.

THE RETURN HOME.

I.

THE favouring wind pipes aloft in the shrouds,
And our keel flies as fast as the shadow of clouds;
The land is in sight, on the verge of the sky,
And the ripple of waters flows pleasantly by,—
And faintly stealing,
Booming, pealing,
Chime from the city the echoing bells;
And louder, clearer,
Softer, nearer,
Ringing sweet welcome the melody swells;
And it's home! and it's home! all our sorrows are pass'd,—
We are home in the land of our fathers at last.

II.

How oft with a pleasure akin to a pain,
In fancy we roam'd through thy pathways again,
Through the mead, through the lane, through the grove, through the corn,
And heard the lark singing its hymn to the morn;
And 'mid the wild wood,
Dear to childhood,
Gather'd the berries that grew by the way;
But all our gladness
Died in sadness,
Fading like dreams in the dawning of day;—
But we're home! we are home! all our sorrows are pass'd,—
We are home in the land of our fathers at last.

III.

We loved thee before, but we'll cherish thee now
With a deeper emotion than words can avow;

Wherever in absence our feet might delay,
We had never a joy like the joy of to-day;
And home returning,
Fondly yearning,
Faces of welcome seem crowding the shore,—
England! England!
Beautiful England!
Peace be around thee, and joy evermore!
And it's home! and it's home! all our sorrows are pass'd,—
We are home in the land of our fathers at last.

TIME AND THE SPRING.

I.

"Oh! spare my tender flowers:
  My lilies born of light,
My snowy apple-blooms,
  My roses, red and white,—
Oh! spare them every one!"
  Said Spring the young and fair,
To Time, whose hand had strewn,
  Her blossoms in the air:
"Why should they perish
  That fill the world with joy?
Be kind, oh Time, and spare them,—
  'Tis cruel to destroy!"

II.

"Oh! foolish maid!" said Time,
"Renounce the idle suit;—
To grant it would deprive
The Autumn of its fruit.
Be thankful for the gifts
That bounteous Heaven bestows;
Enjoy them while they last,
Nor mourn the fading rose.
The world would weary
Did night not follow day;
And Spring herself would perish
If every month were May."

MANNA.

I.

To nourish wandering Israel
In peril, hardship, and distress,
For forty years the manna fell,
A wonder in the wilderness;
Each morn, from fruitful skies above,
The bounty on the earth was pour'd;
And daily proofs of Heavenly love
Proclaim'd the goodness of the Lord.

II.

And in our years of later time,
Shall we believe that nevermore
Is open'd up the fount sublime,
Which flow'd with miracles of yore?

Blind are the eyes that cannot see—
Dead is the heart that knows not well—
In every boon a mystery,
In every gift a miracle.

III.

For us the plenteous clouds distil
The nursing dew, the fruitful rain,
That swells the vintage of the hill,
Or feeds the corn-fields of the plain;
For us the skies pour fatness down;
For us, beyond our power of thought,
Unutter'd unperceived, unknown,
A daily miracle is wrought.

IV.

For us a world with blessings rife
Supplies the constant boons of Heaven;
Health, Reason, Love, Hope, Joy, and Life,
Are wonders wrought—are Manna given.

Lord! ope our hearts that we may feel,
Unbind our eyes that we may see,
The wondrous love Thy works reveal—
And that we perish but for Thee.

THE LAST QUARREL.

I.

THE last time that we quarrell'd, love,
It was an April day,
And through the gushing of the rain,
That beat against the window-pane,
We saw the sunbeams play.
The linnet never ceased its song,
Merry it seem'd, and free;—
"Your eyes have long since made it up,
And why not lips?" quoth he—
You thought;—I thought;—and so 'twas done—
Under the greenwood tree.

II.

The next time that we quarrel, love,
  Far distant be the day,
Of chiding look or angry word!
We'll not forget the little bird
  That sang upon the spray.
Amid your tears, as bright as rain
  When Heaven's fair bow extends,
Your eyes shall mark where love begins,
  And cold estrangement ends;—
You'll think;—I'll think;—and as of old,
  You'll kiss me, and be friends.

FLOWERS IN THE STREAM.

I.

WHAT flowerets, oh river!
Fast flowing for ever,
I threw on thy bosom
  In youth's early day,
Oh river! sad river
  Fast flowing away!
Hope blooming brightly,
Joy springing lightly,
Love, fair as sunshine,
  And born in its ray,
Oh river! sad river,
  I mourn their decay!

II.

Serenely thou flowest—
Rejoicing thou goest,
While *I* stand lamenting
  The summers of yore—
Oh river! sad river!
  Alone on thy shore!
Love unrequited,
Hopes that are blighted,
Joys long departed
  Thou canst not restore!—
Oh river! dark river!
  They blossom no more!

THE MOCK JEWELS.

I.

THE Pedlar stood in the morning light,
  Fluent of speech and smooth was he,
And spread his wares in the public sight;—
  Maranatha! and woe is me!
And he call'd to the people, surging along,
Like rolling billows when seas are strong,—
  There came a dark cloud over the sky.
"Here are gauds for all to wear,
For men, for youths, for maidens fair,—
  The time is passing, come and buy!"
    Oh! the Pedlar!
    The knavish Pedlar!

The Fiend in Pedlar's guise was he!
Selling and buying,
Cheating and lying:
Maranatha! and woe is me!

II.

"Here's a Trinket! here's a gem!
The Queen hath nothing more fair to see,
'Mid the sparkle and glow of her diadem!"
Maranatha! and woe is me!
"Buy it, and wear it, maiden fine,
Cheap love—bright love—love divine!"
There came a dark cloud over the sky!
The maiden bought it, and thought no sin;
But she found a broken heart within,
And the Pedlar cried, "Come buy! come buy!"
Oh! the Pedlar!
The knavish Pedlar!

The Fiend in human guise was he!
Selling and buying,
Cheating and lying:
Maranatha! and woe is me!

III.

"Here's a gaud for the young and bold—
Made for the generous and the free,
Redder than ruby, richer than gold!"
Maranatha! and woe is me!
"Its name is Glory!"—A youth drew near,
And bought the jewel, nor thought it dear;
There came a dark cloud over the sky!
For ere he'd placed it on his breast,
He found he'd lost his Joy and Rest,
And barter'd life for a glittering lie!
Oh! the Pedlar!
The knavish Pedlar!

The fiend in a Pedlar's guise was he,
Selling and buying,
Cheating and lying:
Maranatha! and woe is me!

IV.

"Here's a jewel without a flaw!
Brighter and better none can be;
Win it and wear it, and give the law,"—
Maranatha! and woe is me!
"And its name is Riches!" With roar and shout
The people jostled and swarm'd about;
There came a dark cloud over the sky;
They bought the gem of worldly wealth,
And paid their Conscience and their Health—
While the Pedlar cried "Come buy! come buy!"
Oh! the Pedlar!
The knavish Pedlar!

The Fiend in a Pedlar's guise was he!
Selling and buying,
Cheating and lying:
Maranatha! and woe is me!

V.

In churchyards lone, in the wintry night,
The ghastly Pedlar—dim to see,
Takes his stand on the gravestones white:
Maranatha! and woe is me!
And summons the ghosts from sod and tomb,
And chuckles and grins in the midnight gloom;
Dark are the clouds upon the sky;
And sells them again his shadowy wares,
Loves, Fames, Riches, and Despairs,—
"Jewels—jewels—come and buy!"
Oh! the Pedlar!
The mocking Pedlar!

The Devil in Pedlar's guise is he;
Selling and buying,
Cheating and lying:
Maranatha! and woe is me!

GOOD NIGHT.

I.

Good night! good night!
  The chimes ring loud and clear;
Good night! good night!
  A new-born day is near.
Our mirth has rung, we've danced and sung,
  Our eyes have gleam'd delight;
The day has pass'd, we part at last;
  To each and all, Good night!

II.

Sleep! gentle sleep!
  Thy robe o'er nature lies;
Sleep! gentle sleep!
  Steal softly on our eyes.

And not alone to us be known
  Thy blessings calm and deep;
To pain and care be free as air,
  And soothe them, gentle sleep!

III.

Dreams! happy dreams!
  That right Life's balance wrong;
Dreams! happy dreams!
  Your kind deceits prolong.
Give poor men gold, make young the old,
  Show slaves where freedom beams;
And shed a light on sorrow's night,
  Ye recompensing dreams!

IV.

Good night! good night!
  The chimes give warning clear;
Good night! good night!
  A new-born day is near.

HATE IN THE PULPIT.

A THUNDERER in the pulpit?—let us hear!
He cries with voice of stentor, loud and clear
That God desires no music in His praise
But human voices upon Sabbath-days;
That art in churches is a thing abhorr'd,
And architecture odious to the Lord;
That none, who pray with other forms than
Shall share the blessings of Eternity.

Down, bigot, down! too proud and blind to
That God, who fashion'd all things here belov
Made music and the arts; that organ-tones
Are His creation; that the starry zones
And pomp of the cathedral, both alike
Were form'd by Him. Men's hands can delv

And build or overthrow; but all their power
Is God's alone. Poor creature of an hour,
Be humble and confess how small art thou!
Wouldst carry all God's wisdom on thy brow?
And in the limits of thy sect confine,
The infinite mercy of His Love divine?

Hate in the pulpit!—Down, intruder, down!
The place is holy, and thine angry frown
Sheds visible darkness on the listening throng.
Down, bigot, down! thy heart is in the wrong!
Thou art not pure;—within this place should dwell
Humility, and Love ineffable,
Self-abnegation and the tranquil mind;
And heavenly Charity, enduring, kind;
Patience and Hope, and words of gentleness!
Down to thy closet—not to curse, but bless;
And learn the law—the sum of all the ten—
That love of God includes the love of men.

"LOVE WILL FIND OUT THE WAY."

I.

Over the mountains
  If Love cannot leap,
Down through the valleys
  Unheeded he'll creep.
Whatever his purpose,
  He'll do it or die;
And hardships and dangers
  Confess it and fly.

II.

Poor as a beggar,
  Yet rich as a king;
Stormy as winter,
  And radiant as spring;

He's constant, he's changeful,
  He's night, and he's day;
A guide who misleads us,
  Yet shows us the way.

III.

Drown him in billows
  Deep, deep in the main,
Light as the sea-bird
  He'll float up again.
You think he has perish'd
  In sleet and in showers,
He rises in sunlight,
  And treads over flowers.

IV.

Lock him in darkness,
  In grief, and in thralls,
Laughing to scorn you,
  He'll glide through the walls.

Go chain up a sunbeam,
  Or cage the wild wave;—
Then bind him with fetters,
  And make him a slave!

V.

Call him not haughty—
  He dwells with the poor;
Call him not feeble—
  He's strong to endure;
And call him not foolish—
  He governs the wise;
Nor little—he's greater
  Than earth and the skies.

THE GREAT CRITICS.

WHOM shall we praise?
  Let's praise the dead!—
In no men's ways
Their heads they raise,
  Nor strive for bread
With you or me,—
So, do you see?
  We'll praise the dead!
Let living men
  Dare but to claim
From tongue or pen
  Their meed of fame,

We'll cry them down,
Spoil their renown,
Deny their sense,
Wit, eloquence,
Poetic fire,
All they desire.
Our say is said,
Long live the dead!

THE SHIP

I.

A King, a Pope, and a Kaiser,
  And a Queen—most fair was she—
Went sailing, sailing, sailing,
  Over a sunny sea.
And amid them sat a beggar,—
  A churl of low degree;
And they all went sailing, sailing,
  Over the sunny sea.

II.

And the King said to the Kaiser,
  And his comrades fair and free
"Let us turn adrift this beggar,
  This churl of low degree;

For he taints the balmy odours
That blow to you and me,
As we travel,—sailing, sailing,
Over the sunny sea."

III.

"The ship is mine," said the beggar,—
That churl of low degree;—
"And we're all of us sailing, sailing,
To the grave, o'er the sunny sea.
And you may not, and you cannot,
Get rid of mine, or me;
No! not for your crowns and sceptres—
And my name is DEATH!" quoth he.

THOR'S HAMMER.

[The *dramatis personæ* of the following fable are well-known personages in the Scandinavian mythology. Thor is the son of Odin; his Hammer has the same virtues, and the same faculties, as the Sword of Justice in other mythologies; Loki is the spirit of evil, and contemner of the gods; and Friga, mother of Thor, is the goddess of Peace.]

I.

ONCE on a time,—three thousand years ago,—
Thor left the mountains where the rivers grow,
And took a journey to the world below.

Clad as a blacksmith, in his hand he bore
The avenging Hammer, forged in Heaven of yore,
And sought, far off, a city on the shore.

None knew the god: he walk'd 'mid human kind
Manlike, and stalwart as a labouring hind,
Broad-brow'd and thoughtful, and of quiet mind.

He look'd about him, pondering as he went
Through mart and haven, what the people meant,
With their pale faces, and their shoulders bent:

And what possess'd them. Lo! from every sea
Came in the hurrying ships, with white sails free,
Spread to the breeze, that fill'd them joyously.

He saw the bursting sacks of plenteous corn,
The silk and wool, and all the tribute borne
Northward, from climes beyond the fruitful morn:

Damasks and velvets, trimm'd with sable hems,
The gold, the silver, and the starlike gems,
For fair maids' bosoms, and kings' diadems.

The glowing art, the sulpture half-divine,
The oils, the spice, the fruits incarnadine,
The reeling hogsheads, lumbersome with wine.

And all the people pray'd and wrought for gold;
The few lived sumptuously, and free, and bold,
The many toil'd in hunger and in cold:

But all sought riches; man, and maid, and wife;
Labour's reward, the victory after strife;
Riches, dear riches, aim and end of life.

Great Thor was dazzled; and he sat him down
Amid the teeming people of the town,
And doff'd his sheepskin coat and jerkin brown,

And robed himself in purple like the rest,
Hiding his mighty Hammer in his breast,
And look'd a king, in all his form and gest.

II.

Him Loki follow'd, stealthily and slow,
Loki the jesting, and incredulous foe,
That knew all evil, or aspired to know.

And when the god had prankt himself in state,
Loki did likewise, and with step elate,
Moved to his side and made obeisance great.

"Lord!" he exclaim'd, "if in this happy land
Thou art a stranger, as I understand,
Let me be near thee at thy bold right hand;

"And I will show thee what the country yields,
Better than clang of swords, and dint of shields;—
The wealth of Industry, and smiling fields.

"Is it not good that hungry War should cease,
The household virtues bloom and wealth increase,
And the world prosper in the light of peace?

"Come! let me show thee how this people thrive,
And how they live and toil, and feast and wive—
These busy workers in the human hive.

"Come to the palace I have built and stored;
Thou shalt be welcome to a kingly board,
And for thy pleasure shall the wine be pour'd.

"To give thee joy shall Beauty deck her bowers,
And twine her flowing locks with summer flowers,
And dart live sunshine through thy heart in showers.

"Thou shalt behold more wonder and delight
Than great Walhalla holds, on festal night,
When heroes drink and gods renew the fight."

And Thor went with him. On his path were strewn
Roses and lilies. Loud, in joyous tune,
Sounded the fife, the shalm, and the bassoon.

On Beauty's bosom, as it heaved in sighs,
Sparkled the jewels; sparkled loving eyes;
Sparkled the wine-cup; surged the revelries.

The god rejoiced; he quaff'd the amber wine,
And mortal beauty, to his raptured eyne,
Glow'd with a splendour equal to divine.

He laugh'd and sang; and roystering revel kept,—
Through his hot veins a drowsy pleasure crept,
And in the lap of luxury he slept.

Prone on the couch his brawny limbs he threw,—
Loki beheld—the scoffer—the untrue,—
And from his slumbering breast the Hammer drew.

He stole and vanish'd. Senseless as a stone
Slept mighty Thor, until the morning shone,
And when he waken'd—lo! he was alone.

III.

From Heaven's blue vault there dropp'd a murmur
low,
From Hecla's summit crown'd with Polar snow,
Came the shrill echoes of a voice of woe.

The big rains patter'd it in bubbling drops,
The wild wind breathed it through the trembling copse
The thunder spake it to the mountain-tops;

The deep sea moan'd it to the startled shore,—
"Eternal Justice rules the world no more,
Lost is the Hammer of avenging Thor."

Good men received the tidings, and were sad;
The wicked heard, and reel'd about as mad.
"Ours is the world!" they said, "Rejoice—be glad!

"Ours is the world, to use it as we will;
'Tis ours, to bind or loose—to spare or kill;
Let us enjoy it: let us take our fill.

"Thor hath no Hammer; nerveless is his hand
To deal red vengeance o'er the joyous land,
And scatter nations, as the storms the sand.

"Rejoice, ye peoples! let the song go round,—
Kings are we all; bring wreaths that we be crown'd,
And where we tread, bestrew with flowers the
ground."

Freed from the fear of Heaven's avenging wrath,
Men planted vices in the open path;
The harvest, vice; and crime the aftermath.

Fast grew, fast spread, the poisonous lust of gold;
Youth's love—as in the happy days of old—
Was given no longer,—but was bought and sold.

The young were greedy, calculating, base;
The greedier old thought nothing a disgrace
But want of money, or the loss of place.

To sin and prosper made the world a friend;
To lie was venial,—if it served an end;
'Twas wise to cringe; 'twas politic to bend.

To steal for pence was dastardly and mean;
To rob for millions, with a soul serene,
Soil'd not the fingers,—all success was clean.

Each needy villain haggled for his price;
The base Self-worship spawn'd with every vice,—
Its love was lust, its prudence avarice;

Its courage cruelty; its anger hate;
Its caution lies;—the little and the great
Denied the gods, and dared the blows of Fate.

The Heavens grew dark with anger:—"Thor, awake!
Where is thy Hammer? Shall the gods not take
Vengeance for evil? Shall their thirst not slake?

"Where is thy Hammer, forged in Heaven of yore—
The earth is foul and rotten to the core—
Where is thy Hammer,—thou avenging Thor?"

IV.

Through the deep midnight pierced the awful word—
"Bring back thy Hammer." Earth and Heaven were
stirr'd,
And Hell's remotest depths the echoes heard.

And miserable Thor, distraught, forlorn,
Roam'd o'er the world, and held himself in scorn,
To be so foil'd by Loki, evil-born.

His quivering lips with proud impatience curl'd,
On Loki's head his bitterest curse he hurl'd,
Plague of the gods, and tyrant of the world.

"Hast thou my Hammer, Earth, or thou, oh Heaven?"
Earth spake not, nor the spheres, 'mid all their seven;
But from the wild sea-waves was answer given:—

"Thine awful Hammer slumbers in my breast;
Seek it, oh Thor! and happy be thy quest,
And free the world from rapine and unrest!"

And Thor took ship, and sail'd the stormy sea:—
"Courage and Hope, my comrades twain shall be,
Where'er ye waft me, oh ye wild winds free!

"Farewell, farewell! to all delights of yore,
To gods and heroes, and the Asgard shore,—
Without my Hammer I return no more!

"In storm, or calm, or in the treacherous mist,
The waves shall bear, and float me as they list,
And pitying Heaven shall watch me and assist!"

Northward, three days, 'mid sleet and driving rain,
The vessel sped; and north three days again
It sail'd in starlight, o'er a trackless main.

Northward, still north, three days and nights it flew,
And the shrill winds that o'er its topsails blew,
Froze into sheets of ice the heavy dew.

North—ever north! The breeze forgot to blow,
And hush'd its music in the whispering snow;
But still the vessel cleft the waves below.

North—ever north! Flapp'd out the bellying sail,
'Mid rolling icebergs and a fitful gale,
And storms of cutting sleet and rattling hail.

O'er Heaven's dark vault the darting meteors pour'd,
Like hosts in conflict—hurrying horde on horde;—
And the ice crack'd, and sudden thunders roar'd.

But Thor held on, undaunted as of old,
Through storm, and fog, and sleet, and pitiless cold,
As the ship bore him, by the gods controll'd.

Northward no more! With sudden swirl and spin,
And clash like booming of artillery's din,
The icebergs fell and broke, and hemm'd him in.

He heard a sound of laughter and of shrieks,
And saw a shadow on the frozen peaks,
That brought the warm blood to his angry cheeks.

"I know thee, Loki; but the hour draws near
When thou shalt look upon my face; and fear;—
After thy night, my morning heavenly clear."

And as he spake, there flash'd a crimson glow,
Amid the pinnacles, through berg and floe,
And cover'd all the ship from poop to prow.

And o'er the ice came tripping like a fawn,
In the clear sunlight of a rosy dawn,
When the dews glisten on the grassy lawn,

The fair-hair'd Friga, peaceful and benign,—
Her soft blue eyes stream'd forth a joy divine,
And rainbows clad her in celestial shine.

"Beneath thy keel," she said, "thy Hammer sleeps;
Plunge thou, and seize it, in the deepest deeps,
Where Loki cast it; Heaven expects and weeps."

Quick as a thought, upon the floe he sprang;
The ice divided with an iron clang,
And down he plunged, while Loki's laughter rang.

Up from the wild wave, radiant as the day,
Issued the god, and shook the icy spray
From his broad shoulders, glancing in the ray,

And held aloft the Hammer in both hands:—
"Rejoice, ye nations, and be glad, ye lands,
The throne of Justice on the hill-top stands;

"And Thor's great Hammer vindicates the Right!"
Loki fled howling, while in roseate light
The ship sail'd homeward through the gloomy night.

And Heavenly voices flew from shore to shore;
"Tremble ye wicked! Earth is yours no more;—
Found is the Hammer of avenging Thor!"

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P. 23.

THE LUMP OF GOLD.

"Beneath the elm's o'erarching boughs,
The little children ran."

THE

LUMP OF GOLD:

And Other Poems.

By CHARLES MACKAY,

AUTHOR OF

"BOKRIA," "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES," "THE SALAMANDRINE,"

ETC. ETC.

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THE LUMP OF GOLD.

Part the First.

I.

WHERE shall I hide myself?—
Lost and undone!—
A beggar—an outcast—
Insulting the Sun!
Oh! Yesterday vanished!
How lovely wert thou;—
The hope in my spirit,
The pride on my brow,
The firm self-reliance
My guardian and friend,
The courage unyielding
That Fate could not bend;
Were mine to support me;—
Oh! Yesterday fair!

Come back, oh come back to me,
  Free from despair!
To-day is relentless,
  My judge and my foe;—
And misery tracks me,
  Wherever I go.
My temples are throbbing
  With sin unforgiven;
Men shall not pity me!
  Pity me, Heaven!"

II.

Down came the drenching rain,
Beating the window-pane,
Hoarsely the rusty vane,
  Groan'd to the blast;—
Few in the dreary street,
Plodded with weary feet;—
He, through the piercing sleet
  Shadow-like passed.

The lamps shook and stagger'd,
  And creak'd to the wind;
And each on the pavement
  Threw trailing behind,
A flickering beam,
As of fire on a stream,
  Or torch of the Sprite,
That dances o'er stagnant pools
Cheating belated fools,
  Roaming at night.

III.

Under the doorways,
  Screened from the weather,
Desolate women stood
  Crouching together;
They, as he passed them,
  Wondered, and gazed;—
Said one to the other,
  "He raves, he is crazed!—

Something has troubled him,—
  Hark how he moans!
But why should we pity him
  Here on the stones?
And yet who can help it?
  Do you—if you can;—
I'd trample on Sorrow
  If I were a man.
Men have no misery
  Equal to ours!"
He saw not—he heard not—
  Poor way-trodden flowers,
Your pity escaped him!
  His world was within;—
A world—or a chaos—
  Of anguish and sin.
The rain and the tempest
  Were cool to his cheek,
Balm to his throbbing brow,—
  Hark! did he speak?

"Madness broods over me!
  Kind-hearted Death—
Canst thou not shelter me?
  Vain is my breath!
Take it and welcome—
  And low let me lie;
Low in the quiet grave;
Deep in the doleful wave;
Weary of living,
  Unworthy to die."

IV.

Down came the drenching rain,
  Bubbling and swelling—
Fierce blew the gusty wind,
  Roaring and yelling.
The senate was silent,
  Its orators fled,
The ball-room was empty,
  Its roses were dead.

Listless or half awake
  Through the dull town,
Fashion rode homewards
  In ermine and down ;—
Fashion and Beauty
  All jaded and wan ;
Fast through the tempest
  The steeds gallop'd on.
Fire from their clanging hoofs
  Heavily shod
'Mid the black rain pools
  Flashed where they trod.
Indolent Fashion,
  Weary and warm,
Saw from its chariot
  That desolate form,
Beating its rapid way
  Deaf to the storm :
"Mad!" said the Countess,

"Of drink!" said the Earl;—
"Or love!" said his daughter fair—
Twisting her flaxen hair
Back into curl.

V.

Pass, sleepy Luxury!
Pass on your way!—
You know not the wretchedness
Born every day.
High on life's summit
In sunshine and snow,
You hear not the torrents
That thunder below.
Pass! he regards you not!
Sees not, nor hears;
The roar of your burning wheels
Frets not his ears.
His senses are absent
In worlds of his own—

In deserts of agony
  Lost and alone.

VI.

Calm sleep the citizens;—
  Loud the wind blows;—
If its wild moaning
  Break their repose,
They dream as they hear it,
  Or turn where they lie,
Conscious of happiness,
  Knowing not why,
Except that the flush of morn
  Lights not the sky.
Sleep! happy citizens!
  Sleep every one!
'Tis Misery only
  Wakes ere the Sun.
Rest! Pain and Poverty!
  Sleep! Toil and Care!

Heaven, though it gave you
  Burdens to bear,
Lightens the heavy load,
Shortens the weary road,
  Breathes on your brain,
The balm and the solace
  And healing of pain.
Slumber ye millions
  Calmly till day!
Luxury! Beggary!
  Sleep, while ye may!

VII.

Onwards, still onwards!
  But whither? who knows?
Where the lights quiver
By the black river,
  Thither he goes!
Frenzy goes with him,
  His counsel and guide,

A phantom, a spectre;
  She stalks by his side.
"Idiot," she whispers,
  "See'st thou the end?
Self-respect flies from thee,
  Death is thy friend;
Nothing is left thee!"
  Deep from his heart
Came a denial,—
  "O tempter depart;
She may remain to me!"
  "Fool that thou art!
Hast thou a truth to give
  Pure as of yore?
What shall her broken trust
  Ever restore?
Live, and she'll hate thee;—
  Die;—she'll deplore,
Angel that loved thee once,
  Lost evermore!"

VIII.

Ceas'd the wind, sunk the rain,
  Shone out the starlight;
Calm o'er the silent stream
  Glitter'd each far light.
Lonely in gloomy mood,
On the bleak bridge he stood,
Midway above the flood,
Looking down wistfully
  To the dark waters,
Grave of the young and fair,
  Passion's lost daughters.

IX.

Oh, the pale faces
  Surging and sailing!
Oh, the long garments
  Lapping and trailing!
In the moon-shimmer
  Pallid and wan,

Vapour-like, woman-like,
  Gleaming and gone!
Gleaming a moment,
  Then fading away;
Tombed in the ripple,
  Born in the ray;
Ever he saw their ghosts,
Changeful and mournful hosts,
  Through the waves peering,
Pointing their misty hands,
  Gibing and jeering;—
Then to the starry maze
Turned his weak human gaze,
  Blinded by tears;
Felt on the stormy sea
Of his soul's agony,
Dew-like serenity,
  Drop from the spheres.

X.

Ship-like, full-breasted,
  Travelled the moon,
Swift as a gondola
  In a lagoon,
Through the cloud-highlands
  In silvery glow,
Through the white islands
  Of turretted snow.
Beautiful! Beautiful!
  How could he dare
Ruffle with Passion
  The placid night air—
Or gaze on the moonlight
  With his despair?
Lovely, most lovely!
  How could he stand
There, in the sight of Heaven,
  Clenching his hand;

Fuming and fretting
At Fate's iron bars,
An atom! a grain of dust!
Chiding the stars?
Beautiful! Beautiful!
Peace on its beams,
Slid like a seraph
Into his dreams.
The mists of his spirit
Were rent and withdrawn,
Beautiful! Beautiful!
Welcome the dawn!

XI.

In gold and in purple,
In amber and grey,
Under the steeple vanes,
Eastward away,
Over the house-tops
Blushed the new day.

Filling not wholly
  Heaven's azure cup,
But faintly and slowly
  Morn travelled up.
The moonlight received it,
  And died in a swound;
Hesperus saw it
  And vanished, discrowned—
Steeple and pinnacle,
  Turret and spire,
Crowded and countless
  As flames in a fire;—
All the great city,
  As far as the sight,
Emerged into morning
  And glimmer'd in light.

XII.

Smokeless—and voiceless—
  Majestic and fair—

No roar of its whirlpool
  Of struggle and care,
Broke the sweet silence
  Enfolding the air.
Peace might have made it
  A palace and dome,
Could our wild passions
  Allow it a home.
Peace! no; it cannot rest
On the earth's teeming breast;—
  War is our life!
Sleep is the truce of God
  Plucked from the strife!
To-morrow, that comes not,
  Shall Peace have her throne!
Low in the sleepy air
  Trumpets are blown;—
Wake thee, great city,
  To-day is thine own.

XIII.

Whence came the tremor,
  The flush and the start?
What sent the dancing blood
  Back to his heart?
He saw as if mirror'd,
  That he might behold,
Phantoms of Pride and Hope,
  Glory and Gold;
Phantoms that dazzled him
  All his life long,
Leading him, tempting him,
  Luring him wrong.

XIV.

He saw his dark scroll of life
  Bared to his sight,

Spreading before him
  In darkness or light,
All his heart's history,
All his thought's mystery;
  Back through the years
To the dim distance
  Of his first tears;
Back to the early days,
  When a fair boy,
Spotless and artless
  He carolled in joy,
Plaiting green rushes,
  And gathering flowers,
Full of wild fancies
  As April of showers;
Back to the happy time,
  Crowned with his youth,
When his heart's visions
  Were Beauty and Truth;

Back to his moonlights,
  His yearnings and sighs,
When the best Heaven he sought
Lay in a maiden's thought,
  Or her blue eyes;
Back to the darkness
  Clouding his morn;
Darkness and discord,
  And longings forlorn,
Errors and frailties
  And sufferings keen,
With flashes of gladness
  And glory between.

XV.

Moodily, sullenly
  Watching the tide,
Still the bad angel
  Stood at his side;

Black o'er his path
  Fell her shadow of fear,
Angrily whispered
  Her voice in his ear;
Her voice of reproaches
  Too dreadful to bear.
"Look in thy heart," she said.
  "Fool! and despair!
Fool—that would'st live
  With such guilt on thy head—
Grief is for living men
  Peace for the dead!"

XVI.

Out from the sunshine
  An answer there went,—
"Hush thee, false spirit,
  The man shall repent;—
God's mercy shall save hi
  Dear angel of l

He looked through the morning,
  And saw thee above:
The light of thy garment's hem
  Dazzled the day;
Soft through the purple air
  Borne far away,
Voices ecstatic
  Seemed mingling to say,
"The man shall not perish!"
  Shine brighter, bright dream!
O'er his dark memory,
  Sparkle and beam;
Linger to charm him!
  The struggle shall cease,
The spirit of evi
  Shall leave
The passi
  S

Shine vision of Beauty
His heart to allume,
Good angels be with him,
Day dawns on his gloom!

Part the Second.

I.

EMBOWERED amid the Surrey Hills
  The quiet village lay,
Two rows of ancient cottages
  Beside the public way,
A modest church, with ivied tower,
  And spire with mosses grey.

II.

Beneath the elm's o'erarching boughs
  The little children ran;
The self-same shadows flecked the sward
  In days of good Queen Anne;
And then, as now, the children sang
  Beneath its branches tall—
They grew, they loved, they sinned, they died—
  The tree outlived them all.

But still the human flow'rets grew,
  And still the children played,
And ne'er the tree lacked youthful feet
  To frolic in its shade,
The ploughboy's whistle in the spring,
  Or chant of happy maid.

III.

Oh, pleasant green of Micklethorpe!
  From far Australian shore,
From deep Canadian wilderness
  That hears St. Lawrence roar,
From ships in the Pacific seas,
  Or coast of Labrador,
Comes back to thee the tender thought,
  With dear remembrance crowned;
Thy wandering children love thee well,
  And all the landscape round,
And dream of thee in lonely nights,
  And think thee holy ground.

IV.

And so thou art; and so shalt be;—
  Where'er thy loved ones roam,
The vision of thine ancient tree
  Shall speak to them of home;
The ancient tree, the lone churchyard,
  The monitory spire,
And smoke upcurling through the wood,
  From distant cottage fire—
The scene of many a mother's kiss,
  Or blessing of a sire.

V.

'Twas Sunday morn, and Parson Vale,
  Beloved of high and low,
With smiles for all men's happiness,
  And heart for every woe,
Walked meekly to the parish church,
  With hair as white as snow—

Walked meekly to the parish church,
  Amid his daughters three—
There were more angels at his side
  Than mortal eyes could see—
The four were seven—for with them went
  Faith, Hope, and Charity.

VI.

Faith, Hope, and heavenly Charity—
  Whate'er the good man taught,
Whate'er his text, these blessed three
  Were present to his thought;
He never scorned his fellow men,
  Or held the humblest nought.
He warned the strong, he raised the weak,
  And, like his Master mild,
He helped and comforted the poor,
  And loved each little child,
And, 'mid the moil and dust of life,
  Went forward undefiled.

VII.

His eldest daughter, matron fair,
  In beauty's perfect noon,
Mature, and redolent of sweets,
  And pleasant as a tune,
Walked at his side; his life's best charm,
  Since one perchance more dear,
Had gone before him to the grave,
  In summer of her year,
And left him memories and regrets,
  And three fond hearts to cheer.

VIII.

Sweet Lilian Vale! if some denied
  The splendours of her face,
Not one denied her perfect charm
  Of gentleness and grace.
No dazzling beauty fired her eyes,
  But on her brow serene,

Enthroned upon that ivory seat,
Sat Goodness, like a queen.

IX.

The quiet ripple of her smile
Revealed the peaceful mind,
The mellow moonlight of her eyes
Her sympathies refined;
And when she spoke, the audible charm
Was Beauty for the blind.
Her gentle heart was wooed and won,
But he whose name she bore,
Adventurous for the sake of wealth
Had sought the Australian shore;
And delved the mines of Ballarat
For undiscovered ore.

X.

But not for sake of gold alone
Went Aubrey from his bride,

'Twas restless youth, 'twas love of change,
  'Twas old ancestral pride,
'Twas hope to raise a fallen house
  From penury's disgrace—
To purchase back from usurers
  The birthright of his race;
And dwell respected like his sires
  In Aubrey Park and Place.

XI.

So Lilian kept her father's house,
  Beloved—and loving duty—
A youthful matron—fairest sight
  In all the realm of Beauty.
No dream had she of sudden wealth
  From all her lord's endeavour—
She only prayed his safe return—
  Resigned;—but hopeful ever.

XII.

The four—the seven—went into church,
So meek, so calm, and holy;—
But one unseen had gone before
With downcast eyes and lowly.
Pallid and faint, and travel-worn,
Like one sick-hearted and forlorn;
He shunned the inquiring look,
And sat with chin upon his hand
And eyes upon the Book.

XIII.

The parson preached on Vanity,
And taught his simple flock
How lust of gold would cheat the hope
Till the very fiends did mock,—
The vanity of vanities—
The lesson new and old—
That virtue was the only wealth
Whose sum was never told;

That love of money chilled the heart
  And made the free a slave,
And took away from life and soul
  More bounties than it gave;
That all the gold was ever coined
  Was impotent to buy
Departed youth, lost peace of mind,
  A sunbeam in the sky,
Or half a minute from the grave
  In life's last agony.

XIV.

"Behold!" he said, "the honest man
  Who earns his daily bread,
And, unabashed, lifts up to Heaven
  His independent head;
And taking blessings when they come,
  Enjoys them while they last;
And waits the future day with hope,
  While thankful for the past.

And look at Crœsus, old and sad,
  With millions in his store—
With parks and farms, and mines and mills,
  And fisheries on the shore:—
His money is his bane of life,
  He dreads the workhouse door.

XV.

"He dreams his wife, his child, his friends,
  His servants, all mankind,
Are leagued to plunder and deceive—
  He trembles at the wind:
He shakes with palsy and distrust—
  He fares like beggar hind.
He grudges nature half the crust
  That hungry need demands,
And sees in visions of the day
  The auction of his lands;
His body in the pauper's grave,
  His gold in robber hands."

XVI.

A sigh, deep-drawn, betrayed some heart
  That felt compunctious wrong;—
The preacher heard; oh, lonely heart!
  Take courage and be strong!—
"Behold again, how Sporus lived;—
  From youth till past his prime,
From morn of manhood to its eve,
  He toiled for future time,
His forehead turned from Heaven to Earth,
  In picking gold from slime;
Gold for his need, to keep and breed,
  That ere his life's last hour,
Among the mighty of the land,
  The Lord of hall and bower,
He might be worshipped for his wealth,
  And float in seas of power.

XVII.

"Unhappy prisoner,—self-immured!
Poor hunter of a shade!
The o'er-laboured brain refused its work—
The fire of life decayed.
Amid the ruins of his mind,
Enthron'd in darkness grim,
Lord of his life, there sat a fiend
Would tear him limb from limb;
Oh Death, that pitiest all below,
Look down and pity him!"

XVIII.

Again an audible sigh escaped
A sinner in the crowd;—
None knew the heart that thus betrayed
Its agonies aloud:
But the preacher looked with eyes benign;
"Come! hear an olden tale,

Culled from the storehouse of the Past—
  A truth within the veil."

XIX.

The murmurous river of breath was hushed,—
  Like the ripple of a brook,
When the sudden frost comes flashing down
  And fixes it with a look;—
So vast the silence as he spoke,
  You might have heard the grass
Rustle and wave to the fitful winds,
  And the bee, in haste to pass,
Sounding a trump like a martial call
  On a clarion of brass.

XX.

You might have heard the sparrow cheep
  Mid the yew-berries juicy red,
And the long rank nettles singing a dirge
  Over the nameless dead,

Where they lay as calmly as the 'squire
With the 'scutcheons o'er his head—
Calmly, calmly, pauper and 'squire,
Each in his narrow bed!

The Builder.

"What art thou building, building,
So lofty to behold,
With the silver and the gilding
The ivory and the gold,
And porphry columns rising
Like trees in the forest old?

"Why place thy marble basements
So deep in the cold earth's veins,
And thy towers and window casements
So high o'er the steeple fanes,
And why those ponderous portals
With iron bolts and chains?

"And why those guards and warders
With horn and signal calls,
And far on thy furthest borders
The moats and brazen walls?—
Dost fear invading robbers,
Or the foeman in thy halls?"

"I build a house of splendour,
Where in the world's despite,
I may force the hours to render
Their tribute of delight;
A house on the hill-top shining,
Far seen, like a star at night.

"I dread nor thief, nor foeman;—
My board shall teem with cheer,
When hunger bids, shall no man
Be scorned or stinted here,
But I raise these gates and turrets
To guard me from a Fear!

"To guard me safe-enfolden
Like a seed at the apple-core;
Oh bolts and barriers golden,
Keep well the outer door,
That SORROW may not enter
To sting me as of yore!"

"Oh fool, in thy lordly palace!
Oh fool, with bolts and bars!
Thou'lt find her in thy chalice;
She'll float in the wild-wind cars;
She'll glide in the air thou breathest;
She'll smite thee from the stars!

"She'll come to thee in the morning
When the light of day streams in,
She'll sit with thee in the evening,—
Thou fool, and child of sin!—
And whisper at thy pillow,
And claim thee of her kin.

"In spite of all thy building,
And all thy warders stout,
And all thy gold and gilding,
She'll hedge thee round about:—
Heart-purity, and goodness,
Alone shall keep her out."

XXI.

The little flock went cheerily forth,
That sunny summer morn;
The poor man, at his humble feast,
Looked out on the growing corn,
And blessed the Providence of Heaven,
And the hour that he was born:
And the rich man owned that wealth alone
Was a boon of little worth,
If it brought not happy peace of mind,
And the glow of innocent mirth,

And the will to cheer and sanctify
The bye-ways of the earth.

XXII.

'Twas Monday morn at Micklethorpe,
And all its little world
Was up and stirring—out or in;—
The mill resumed its click and din,
And the mill-wheel spun and swirl'd,
And the mill-stream danced in the morning light,
And all its eddies curl'd.

XXIII.

The mealy miller sniffed the breeze,
And boded pleasant weather;
The sturdy blacksmith bared his arm,
And donned his apron-leather;
While the jangling bells of the waggoner's team
They all kept time together.

The hostler whistled a poaching tune;
  And the landlord of the "Crown,"
Ruddy and round, came out to greet
  The coach from the distant town;—
For the railway spared this nook of hills,
  By leagues of park and down.

XXIV.

The gardener's lad, who pruned the trees
  That grew by the rectory wall,
Sang as he wrought, with wandering thought,
  And a heart at peace with all.
Merry the lay, and clear as day;
  The parson heard the words
Come in at the open window-sill,
  With the twitter of the birds;
And smiled to himself a quiet smile—
  "An honest lad and free,
If he believe in the song he sings—
  And a song well sung!" quoth he.

Earl Norman and John Truman.

"THROUGH great Earl Norman's acres wide,
A prosperous and a good land,
'Twill take you fifty miles to ride,
O'er grass, and corn, and woodland.
His age is sixty-nine, or near—
And I'm scarce twenty-two, man,
And have but fifty pounds a-year—
Poor John Truman!
But would I change? I'faith! not I!
Oh no, not I, says Truman!

"Earl Norman dwells in halls of state,
The grandest in the county;
Has forty cousins at his gate,
To feed upon his bounty.
But then he's deaf; the doctor's care—
While I in whispers woo, man,

And find my physic in the air—
  Stout John Truman!
D'ye think I'd change for thrice his gold?
  Oh no, not I, says Truman!

"Earl Norman boasts a garter'd knee—
  A proof of royal graces;
I wear, by Nelly wrought for me,
  A silken pair of braces.
He sports a star upon his breast,
  And I a violet blue, man—
The gift of her who loves me best—
  Proud John Truman!
I'd be myself—and not the Earl—
  Oh that would I, says Truman!"

XXV.

There were more listeners to the song
  Than the jocund gardener knew,

The parson, and his daughters fair,
With their eyes of merry blue.—
And one without, by the hawthorn-hedge,
Who roamed the green lanes through;
Who roamed the green lanes up and down,
But stopped as the gardener sang,
And heard the sound of his careless voice
As clear on the breeze it rang;
"Ah me!" he said, with bitter thought,
"For the days for ever gone,
When I could sing in the morning light
With the whole world's benison,
And fear no fiend in my own heart's core
Goading me ever on!"

XXVI.

Tumultuous discord filled his soul—
How could he stand to hear,
The jarring joy, the mocking mirth
That sprang from a conscience clear?

Away! away! for the shadow fell,
And the darkness gathered near!

XXVII.

One glance at Lilian through the leaves,
As she stood mid the lattice flowers,
Looking abroad like a ray of light
On this darkening world of ours,
And he was gone; he knew not whither—
Into the wild-wood bowers;—
Into the wild-wood's deepest bowers
Where none might see his pain,
And where the pitying trees might shield
The sunshine from his brain;
Where he might weep; if tears would come
With their showers of blessed rain:
Not yet! not yet! his barren eyes
Implored the dews in vain.

XXVIII.

O'er Meikleham Down the evening star
  Shone radiant as the moon,
The balancing, floating, twinkling lark
  As blithe as it were noon,—
Received the twilight with a song;—
  More free than the nightingale,
Who keeps her fancies for the stars
  And chants to the moonlight pale,
But lets the daylight glow unsung;—
  Not so the liberal lark,
Familiar as the fragrant air
  Who hails both dawn and dark;
Like a cheerful heart, too busy with joy
  To dream the world goes wrong,
But thankful ever, complaining never,
  Buoys itself up with song.

XXIX.

Across the Down went Lucy Gore,
  The farmer's only daughter,
But nine years old—with glowing cheeks
  And smiles like wimpling water.
Three miles she sped to Micklethorpe,
  By shady lane and alley,
Across the stiles and through the copse,
  And the corn-fields in the valley;
As brave as childish innocence
  That fears nor foe nor stranger,
She never stopped or looked behind,
  Or thought of toil or danger.

XXX.

With little hand she gently tapped
  At the open Rectory door;
To Parson Vale, and him alone,
  Her earnest bode she bore;

And Lilian gave her welcome kind,
  But wondered what could bring
So young a carrier dove as this
  So late upon the wing.

XXXI.

The simple tale was briefly told—
  A man in evil plight,
A stranger in her father's house,
  Lay suffering in their sight:
Self-tortured—wandering in his speech—
  With fancies dark and wild—
And unintelligible all,
  "Except," said the little child,
"When he calls on Parson Vale to come,
  For God's and pity's sake,
And hear the sorrows of his heart
  Before his heart shall break;—
And I," said Lucy Gore, "am come
  For Christ's and pity's sake."

XXXII.

The Parson's face, a morning sky
  Suffused with light from Heaven,
Grew radiant with his meek resolve;—
  "Be all our sins forgiven—
I'll go, and cheer the soul-sick man."—
  He kissed his children three
Lovingly on the cheek and brow—
  And Lucy Gore and he
Went hand-in-hand across the down,
  In the light of charity.

Part the Third.

I.

"Thou'rt better, Edward," said, in gentle tone,
Aubrey's own Lilian, o'er his pillow bending;
"The fever and the agony are gone,
And peace is with thee." One warm tear descending,
Fell on his hand. "Oh, piteous dew," he said,
"That shows she loves me; would the healing flow
If I could tell her all that she must know
When the cold grass waves dankly o'er my head?"

II.

"Aye! Edward! I am thine: whate'er thou art!"
His pale face shone with ecstacy of gladness—
A moment only: looming from his heart
Came the dark shadow of unsolaced sadness.
"Few are mine hours," he said, "and full of sorrow,
But if thou'lt pity and forgive my guilt,

I could die happier; from thy face I borrow
Mine only joy:—Thou'lt pity me?—Thou wilt?"

III.

"Aye! from my heart's deep heart, and inmost soul!
How could I love thee, if I did not share
All thou endurest; all but thy despair?
Look up repenting: Faith shall make thee whole;
And if this human love, so frail and fond,
Shall lead thee to it, rise from thy despond,
And know it thine; thine only, as of yore,
And thine, thine only—now and evermore.

IV.

"True love bears all but treason to itself
In sorrow, comforting; in loss of pelf
Coining its looks to treasure; kindly words
To fortunes and estates; in guilt and pain
Looking up hopefully through Sorrow's rain
To sunshine and the chant of heavenly birds!"

V.

"Let me die happy!" said the feeble man;—
The parson entered, all his visage bright
With inward glory,—"No—thou shalt not die—
Lily brings comfort, all that true love can,
But I bring greater; on thy soul's dim night
Impetuous morning rushes from the sky,
And shows thee hope on earth as well as heaven."
He looked up doubtful,—"I am unforgiven!"

VI.

"Nay!" said the parson. "Darest thou define
The infinite height and depth of love divine
Or scope of mercy? Leave us for a space,
Lily, my child." She glided from the place
Like a fair sunbeam from the lingering gloom,
And Aubrey felt a chilness in the room;
And darkness where so late pure light had shone.
"Why didst thou bid my star of peace be gone?

Without her presence life forgets to burn—
Let me not die until the light return!"

VII.

Three hours beside his bed the good man sat,
Watchful, benign, and patient. Their discourse
Lilian nor knew, nor guessed;—but hoped and prayed
That on her lord's sad soul long-vanished peace
Might fall like moonlight on a troubled sea,
Or choral music in cathedral aisles,
That stills all worldly passion where it breathes,
And wafts the willing fancy straight to heaven
Amid the seraphim that know and love,
And milder cherubim that love and know;—
Their whispers, melodies, their converse high,
Eternal harmonies unheard of men
Imagined only by the ecstatic few
Who catch far off faint echoes of their song,
And tell to none the mysteries they dream.

VIII.

Was her hope vain? She thought not, when she saw
Her father's face; and when he spoke, the hope
Flushed into certainty. "Let him repose—
He hath heard news that will revive his soul.
No evil dreams shall vex him;—let him rest.
Watch thou beside him, Lily, if thou wilt,
And when he wakes, make known that I am here.
Say nothing more of me, but of thyself
All that thy love may dictate. He is healed."

IX.

And so it happened. "Lily," said her lord,
Ere passed the week, as, leaning on her arm,
He walked in sunshine through the leafy lanes,
And caught the odorous breezes on his cheeks—
"I feel new life; all joys that I had lost
Have come back greater, fairer than before;
To thee I owe them, and thy saintly sire.

When I am stronger, as I soon shall be,
I'll tell thee all the evil I have done
Since last I left thee for the golden land;
And all the good, I hope, full blessed with thee,
To do hereafter. Courage fails me yet—
But no, not courage;—only strength;—that comes
Daily and hourly. Meanwhile, the blue sky,
The wind that wantons 'mid the oaken boughs,
And sports amid thy hair, dear love, and mine;
The sunshine, and the wild flowers by the way,
The innocent carol of the heartsome birds,
Fill me with joy so deep, I dread to tell
How blest I am, lest telling it should mar,
And seem to invite the lurking fiends that watch
To strike the goblet from our thirsty lips,
And punish happiness that boasts too soon;—
As if they said—'since happiness can be,
The fault is ours;—out with it from the world!'"

X.

"Be glad and fear not!" was the prompt reply,
"Innocent joy is piety to God,
A joy diffusive, like the light of heaven,
Fair in itself, and making all things fair,
Even in its shadow!" Thus they walked and spake;
And thus came splendour to his fading eye,
Thus came the crimson to his pallid cheek,
The hopeful courage to his youthful heart
That Sorrow had not dulled with apathy,
Or punctured with the poisonous gall of hate.

XI.

"Thy father knows my secret—so must thou,"
Said Aubrey to his wife one summer morn,
Sitting upon the green sward 'mid the flowers;
"I've strength to tell it, and from thee, sweet heart,
I may hide nothing—of thy love secure;—
Dreading to lose thy love, I might conceal

Aught that would rob me of the meanest mite
Of an affection which is more than life;—
That which upholds it, chastens and adorns.

XII.

"The shadow is past: the storm-bent tree, unscathed,
Stands in its place and lifts its boughs to heaven,
And if I've suffered—suffering nerves the strong.
The placid river, flowing through the mead,
Shows not its strength; but when its pathway slopes
Downwards 'mid jagged rocks, and chasms austere,
It knows the task necessity decreed,
And awes the world with spectacle of power.
Such course I've run; and now, grown calm once more,
I can reflect the starlight of thine eyes,
And mirror in clear heart the things of heaven.
Come place thy hand in mine, and hear the tale."

Part the Fourth.

I.

Two years ago, five hundred souls,
We sailed in the good ship "Anne,"
Some to trade, and many to dig,
And some under Fortune's ban;
But all intent on the bright red gold,
That gladdens the heart of man.

II.

No tears were shed, as our vessel sped
Where the free fresh breezes bore;
We thought of the wealth our hands should win,
And cared not to deplore
A land unmotherly to us,
Who drove us from her shore,
Wherever we would, for evil or good,
To wipe away the stain

That poverty burns on the breast and brow,
  With a brand like that of Cain;—
To rub it off with the virtue of gold,
  And the potency of gain.

III.

There were but two—and I was one—
  Regretful to depart;
And we were friends, we knew not why,
Except for the hidden sympathy
  That acts from heart to heart
Magnetic, ere the tongue can say
  "My friend! I feel thou art!"

IV.

Like one awaking from a dream,
  Ere the mist of slumber clears,
I wondered whether I slept or wak'd,
  And what made tarry my tears;

Asking myself—"And can it be
  That I've done my heart such wrong
As to leave my Lily—my Queen of flowers—
  That bloomed in my bosom long,
And join, for the sake of the dreary dross,
  This miserable throng?"

V.

But Hope went with me; thou wert safe,
  And I thought of a coming day,
When my Lily should bloom in a lordly bower,
  The Queen of my life's glad May;
And built high palaces of cloud,
  To gleam in the morning ray.
Palace and tower of changing form;—
  Ever they fell and rose,
But ever amid their purple halls,
  And corridors of snows,
I saw the gleam of thy spangled robes,
  And thy feet like twinkling stars;

And heard thy voice, and saw thy face
  Peering through golden bars.

VI.

At evening, when the sun went down,
  All heaven for his attire,
We watched the glory of his face—
  The old Imperial Sire—
Sinking to rest in the regal we
  In robes of crimson fire.

VII.

Five hundred souls on good ship board,
  And only two to bless
The splendour of the closing day,
  And the twilight loveliness!
Five hundred souls, and only two
  To look into the night,
In its ineffable majesty,
  And wonder at the sight,

With love no language could express,
And yearnings infinite!

VIII.

We saw communion in our eyes,
The voiceless thought of each;
The frozen founts of sympathy
Were loosened into speech.
The lighthouse glittered faint and far,
But ere we lost its flame,
Each knew the other's hopes and fears,
His kindred and his name;
The uneasy spirit that urged him forth,
And the country whence he came.

IX.

Four weary months on the dreary sea,
We paced the deck together;
Dreading no foe but the treacherous berg
And the breezeless summer weather,

When the idle topsail hung on the mast
  As useless as a feather.

X.

The sailors glancing to the south
  Discoursed of mist and snow,
"Heaven grant!" they said, "deliverance
  From the iceberg and the floe!"
Far as our wondering eyes could reach
  Uprose their summits clear;—
Like cities on a distant shore
  We saw them floating near;
Cathedrals, pinnacles, and towers,
  And palaces of cold,
Rose-tinted, amber, opal blue,
  Alight with living gold.

XI.

Fair Ocean Alps! we could but gaze
  With wonder and delight,

Though still the wary seaman spoke
Of perils in the night:—
"Heaven be our hope! and guide us safe
Through perils of the night!"

XII.

And were our eyes and ears deceived,
And were we near a town?
Far from the ship, beyond the ice
A league or more, adown,
We heard the sound of pealing bells,
One! two! and three! and four!
"Rejoice!" we cried, "the land! the land!
They're ringing on the shore!"

XIII.

Oh, cheating dream oh, credulous hope!
We could have wept, each one;—
'Twas but our own ship's bell that rung
At setting of the sun.

The echoes, muffled in the cold,
  Came back forlorn and lost,
Dim shadows of departed sounds,
  From the caverns of the frost;
And we were alone on the wide wide sea,
  With the icebergs and the frost.

XIV.

Three days and nights they hemmed us in,
  An adamantine wall,
We saw their peaks and battlements,
  We heard them crack and fall.
The fourth day when we rose at morn
  The favouring breezes blew,
The dwindling icebergs far behind
  Had left us passage through;
The good ship sped, our sails were spread
  Full breasted to the sky,
And for aid in peril and distress
  We praised the Lord on High.

XV.

At length, impatient of the ship,
We reached the golden land,
And Heseltine and I took leave
Upon its desolate strand,
And breathed the hope to meet again
Fervently, hand in hand.
And I went out to the wilderness
With earnest heart and high,
To put my manhood to the test
All danger to deny,
And gather store of the burning gold
That all men deify.

XVI.

Day by day I toiled and dug;
I was the veriest slave,
Who ever sold himself to chains—
I wrought with fool and knave,

With the selfsame toil for the selfsame end;
  I hated them one and all,
So stubborn of heart—so coarse of tongue,
  Such bondsmen under thrall,
So mean and grasping—pity me Heaven!
  I hated them one and all.

XVII.

All the deeper my hatred grew,
  Because from day to day
I feared and felt I might become
  As grovelling as they.
I saw their vices in my own,
  And turned my eyes away.

XVIII.

One was a peer of ancient blood,
  The lord of acres—none;
And one a wrangler from the Cam
  In purse and name undone;

And one could speak in choicest Greek,
  And one was a bishop's son.

XIX.

And they dug, and dug, and so did I,
  And many a hundred more,
Who claimed me of their brotherhood
  For the greed of the golden ore.
But I loathed them from my haughty heart,
  And kept myself aside,
A moody man but little esteemed,
  With armour strong and tried,
Armour of proof and coat of mail,—
  Unconquerable pride.

XX.

One morn, apart and unobserved,
  I roamed beyond the bound,
And saw a streak of glittering gold
  An inch above the ground;

I could not lift it with my hands;—
  I dug, and none was near;—
I scraped the earth with greedy haste
  In a pang of joy and fear

XXI.

And oh! the lustful agony,
  I sought not to control—
The avarice greedy as Hell's own fire,
  That stirred me body and soul,
As I bared it forth—and inch by inch
  Measured it—part, and whole.

XXII.

The gold was long, and broad, and thick,
  As the statue of a man;—
I felt a fever in my blood
  That through my pulses ran,
As I looked and wondered at the wealth
  All mine to have and hold;

Alas! not so; I could not move
  This thing so heavy and cold;—
Nor I nor twenty men could stir
  The fiendish lump of gold.

XXIII.

I sat and gazed with savage eyes,
  Till joy gave place to dread;
I felt the fate of Tantalus;—
  I smote my aching head.
A coward terror blenched my face,
  The rustle of a leaf
Filled me with fear, lest it should tell
  The footsteps of a thief;
I trembled at the waving grass,
  And the whisper of the wind;
While the cry of the parrot, hoarse and har
  In the thicket boughs behind,
Made my cheeks burn, it seemed so like
  The voice of human kind.

XXIV.

In haste and dread I covered it up—
  I covered it up with sand;
With sand, and clay, and clods of earth;—
  I wrought with foot and hand;
I flattened the earth, and made it firm,
  Then strewed it o'er with leaves,
As if the wild autumnal winds,
  Through melancholy eves,
Had blown their dead to moulder there;
  And then I went my way;—
And with me went a burning heart,
  That hoped, but could not pray!

XXV.

But oh! the dreams—the joyous dreams—
  Like sunbeams on a sea,
That sparkled on my restless mind,
  When I thought of my gold, and thee!

And oh! the overcrowding hopes
  That looked in my face and smiled,
As I lay awake through the feverish night,
  And heard the laughter wild
Of the roystering diggers singing their songs
  To the small hours of the morn—
Hopes, and plans, and changeful dreams,
  Of pride and avarice born:—
Ah no! not so—I wrong my heart,
  When I listen to my scorn!

XXVI.

Heaven be my witness—love for thee
  Through all my frenzy wrought;—
And from the splendour of thine eyes
  My sordid passion caught
A reflex of the generous fire
  That sanctifies thy thought.
I prized not gold to hide and hoard,
  Like miserable dirt;

I sought it not for evil ends,
  Or my fellow-creatures' hurt;
But for sake of luxury and power—
  To spend it like a king;
To herd no more among the mean,
  Who crawl for want of wing;
But to soar aloft in the morning light,
  And revel in the spring.

XXVII.

Oh glorious dream! I sowed—I reaped—
  Rebuilt my feudal tower,
And through my old paternal groves,
  My avenue and bower,
I walked the monarch of the place
  In affluence of power.

XXVIII.

I built a dome for ancient art,
  The master-works of Time,

For Titian, Guido, Tintoret,
And Rubens the sublime;
For living art that charms the world
As potently as they,
Our English Raphaels—great perchance
As Raphaels passed away,
And none the less because they work
O'ershadowed by To-day.

XXIX.

I built a palace for my books,
So vast that kings themselves
Might marvel at the wealth of wit
I treasured on my shelves.
All art—all luxury and state,
The waifs of peace and war,
Choice pictures, vases, bronzes, gems,
I gathered from afar,
And all for thee my Love, my Queen—
My Life—my Polar Star!

XXX.

Foils to the splendour of thy charms,
  I scattered at thy feet—
As breezes in the early June
  Strew earth with blossoms sweet—
A shower of rubies, emeralds, pearls,
  And diamonds for thy hair;
So that the proudest woman born
  Might own thee past compare;
And say, "She's happy—she's beloved,
  As rich as she is fair."
While I might whisper to myself,
  "Her smiles are purer gems;
Her loving looks are greater wealth
  Than regal diadems;
Her words the treasures of my soul,
  And she, if forced to part,
With all things but her pomp of youth
  And purity of heart,

Would be a paragon of wealth,
And pauperize the mart."

XXXI.

But not alone for thee and me
Were all my hurrying dreams,
For I poured my wealth as Alpine peaks
Pour down the April streams.
To Kate thy sister, merry of laugh,
Amid her gay compeers.
But shy as a berry 'mid the leaves
To the eyes of cavaliers;
I gave a dowry for an Earl;
For Margery bright as she,
But changeful as the clouds of even
When the sun upon the rim of Heaven
Is sinking to the sea,
I counted out the jingling gold;
The coins fell fast and free;—

Into her lap as many I told
  As leaves on the tall oak tree.

XXXII.

At morn, with hot, o'erwatchful eyes,
  I rose ere twilight fair,
And walked abroad with stealthy tread,
  Suspicious of the air,
And jealous lest the babbling stones
  My footsteps should declare.

XXXIII.

I sought the place where my treasure slept;
  The dews were on the ground,
Each silvery drop on the crinkled leaves
  Lay, like a jewel, round.
No human foot had passed that way
  Since the setting of the sun,
And the thought that weighed on my heavy heart
  Was a secret known to none.

XXXIV.

What should I do? 'Twere hard to say!
I could not move my wealth;
I could not bruise it into lumps,
And carry it off by stealth.
I could not tell the men I scorned,
Till my inmost heart did ache,
How great a treasure I had found,
And ask them to partake;
To come with the crowbar and the pike
To lift my ponderous gold,
And help me for an equal share,
Fully and fairly told,
For I knew they'd break the holiest oath,
And murder me for gold.

XXXV.

I waked in fear—I slept in dread—
I was afraid of day,

Lest its heedless light to human eyes
  My secret should betray;
And when I visited the spot
  I walked another way—
Miles about like a dodging fox,
  Keen-eyed and strong of limb,
Lest men should follow and mark the place
  Where slept mine idol grim;
And slay the worshipper at the shrine
  For the sake of the saint below;
The fiendish saint—the golden god—
  My comforter—my foe!

XXXVI.

But mostly in the dull dark night,
  Armed to the teeth, I prowled,
Stern as the wolves on the granite crags
  That stared at me and howled.
I lost the fellowship of man,
  My heart grew hard as stone;

I uttered words that stung his pride,
  Too bitter to be borne.
Taunt followed taunt—he drove me mad—
  He struck me on the face;
And quick as thought—but thoughtless all,
  Except of the disgrace—
I raised the mallet in my hand
  And fell'd him on the place.

XLI.

His forehead bled—he lay as dead—
  I wiped his streaming cheek;
I would have given my heart's last drop
  If I could hear him speak.
I called him by the dearest names,
  His senseless lips I kissed;
I sought for water; I prayed to Heaven;
  I chafed his pulseless wrist,
And cursed, in my deep, deep agony,
  The gold for which I'd slain

A life that all the gold in the world
  Could ne'er bring back again.

XLII.

I wandered forth to search for help;
  I left him on the ground:
I could not bury my dead myself;
  I wander'd round and round,
And lost my way in the weary night;—
  All night long I strayed,
Or sat upon the barren crags
  Alone, and not afraid,
Except of a phantom blacker than night,
  That grew in my heart dismayed.

XLIII.

I found the place at the dawn of day,
  But not the murder'd man;
Had strangers come and buried my dead,
  With heart-wrung pity and ban?

Or had the seeming dead revived
  From a blow that failed to kill,
And lived for the sake of the dear, dear gold,
  And the vengeance dearer still?

XLIV.

A sudden frenzy raised my hair—
  I knew not what I did;
But I thought the golden fiend arose
  From the ground where it lay hid,
And chased me with convulsive steps
  Over the land and sea,
Sitting beside me when I slept,
  Eating its bread with me;
Mocking me with its yawning eyes,
  Raising its yellow hand,
And driving, driving, driving me on,
  Over the sea and land.

XLV.

I fled—it followed; and though I knew
  'Twas the creature of my brain,
Born of the agony of guilt,
  I strove with it in vain:
Ever it followed, and ever I fled,
  Over the land and sea,
Mocking me with its yellow hand,
  Eating its bread with me;
And would have goaded me to the death,
  Except for the love of thee.

XLVI.

A hideous likeness of myself,
  A torture to behold;
Part was throbbing flesh and blood,
  Part was senseless gold.
It stood between me and the sun—
  It fouled the healthy air—

I looked to heaven, to fly its face,
And lo! the fiend was there.
I looked to earth, and at its feet
I saw a yawning pit;
It grinned, and pointed with its hand,
And said "Thy bones will fit."

XLVII.

And in the ship, as I hurried home,
I saw it in the shrouds;
It came and went from ship to wave,
From billow to the clouds;
It poisoned earth, it tainted heaven,
And dared, when sleep drew near,
To grasp me in its ghastly arms,
And whisper in my ear—
And say, "I've bought thee, body and soul;
Look in my face, and fear!"

XLVIII.

Long wandering brought me home at last—
  Oh! blessed be the hour!
I saw thee in the parish church;—
  I felt the preacher's power,
And hoped that I might die forgiven,
And make my peace with thee and Heaven.
  And hour, more blessed still,
Thy father came to my sorrowful bed,
  And ministered to mine ill.
He raised and comforted my heart;
  He heard the tale I told,
And laid with the unction of his words
  The haunting spirit of gold;
Repentance banished it from my sight,
  And I prayed and was consoled.

XLIX.

'Twas he who taught me how to die,
  And better, oh! better far;

He taught me how to live for thee,
  My joy and guiding star!
He found the living friend again,
  And brought me from his hand,
The visible proofs—the written words—
  That he lived in his native land,
And had forgiven the wrong I did,
  When I smote him with my hand.

L.

Henceforth I'm thine, and only thine!
  Content with little store,
I'll let the red gold sleep in peace,
  And sell my soul no more.
I'm happy—as mortal heart can hope—
  Since my sin has been removed;
I envy no man's wealth or power,
  I love—and am beloved.

Spin round, big world!—thou'lt trouble me not!
Flare Pomp! thou'rt nought to me!
And strive Ambition;—there's joy in the world
Unknown to thine and thee!

Epilogue.

SUCH was the tale; and witness of its truth
Came, ere the winter, Heseltine himself;
A fresh, full-bearded, brawny shouldered man,
Browned by the sun, and radiant with the strength
Of travel and pure breezes;—a glad face
Where guile or falsehood could not find a pore
To hide or harbour in; so clear it shone
In candour and simplicity of mind.

The friends long parted met like day and night,
And there was sunrise in the hearts of both;
And they were friends again, their friendship tried,
Like iron in the furnace, turned to steel.

"How of the gold?" said Heseltine one night,
When round the fire the little household met,
And the wind whistled through the outer door
And boomed and thundered down the chimney gorge;–
"If there it lies," said Aubrey, with a smile,
"There let it lie for me! I yield my right
Of first discovery. If Columbus I,
Amerigo Vespuccio thou shalt be,
And take the glory and the recompence."

"The nugget lies untouched," said Heseltine.
After you sailed, I heard that you had gone.
And not to leave the gold for alien eyes,
I visited the scene of our mishap,
And there beheld the treasure covered up.
I knew your hand, and put the final touch
To the great work. Aye, you may laugh or doubt,
But thus I did. I covered up the soil
Above the treasure; shaped it like a mound
Over a village grave. Forgive the deed;

In clerical presence it appears profane,
And so I deem it now, and do not boast,
But tell the truth, although against myself.
And at the end I placed a little cross
Of rudest workmanship, on which I graved
Deep with my bowie knife this epitaph:
'Here lies a sinner—trouble not his bones.' "

The parson shook his head, but yet he smiled.
"If there be body-snatchers in the south,
They'll find a prize," said Aubrey. "Let them find!
Their monstrous nugget shall not vex my soul."

"'Twill not be troubled," answered Heseltine,
"Till I return to dig it into light.
I've made my pact. I've chosen all my men—
You not gainsaying,—stout of heart and hand
And we shall sail to Melbourne as we may,
And draw the treasure from the earth's good Bank,
Into the daylight, which it shall adorn.
Half shall be yours, and with the other half

I'll pay my diggers, and all cost beside,
And have sufficient to be more than rich.

"A welcome and a bed in Aubrey Place,
And a week's shooting o'er your forest lands,
Once in a year, is all that I shall ask
To pay me back with usury all you owe.
If you hate money much as once you loved,
Learn wisdom from a simple-minded man.
Why should we love or hate it, and not serve
Great needs with it? If sailors love the wind,
And cooks the fire, and millers the full stream,
Not for the sake of wind, or fire, or flood,
But for great purpose, useful to mankind,
So should the wise love Gold;—but not too well.
Such my philosophy—and why not yours?"

II.

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. MARC.

THROUGH the old city
  The gondolas crawl,
Sable and doleful
  And coffin-like all.
Bright though the sunshine,
  And blue though the skies,
Deep over Venice
  A shadow there lies.
Day cannot cover it,
Death watches over it,
  With his dim eyes.

The broad Canalazzo
  Is quiet as glass,
O'er its calm waters
  The gondolas pass;

So dimly, so smoothly,
  So sadly they go,
Wer't not for the morning
  That glitters below,
You'd fancy Styx river
  And Charons that row.

Each lordly palazzo
  That borders the stream,
Like something remembered,
  Or seen in a dream,
Stands lovely, but ghostlike,
  And he who looks on
Imagines the vision
  Must change, or be gone.
The ripple behind him,
  Or plash of the oar,
Scarce breaks the reflexion
  Of palace and shore.

It quivers a moment,
  And sleeps as before,
So clear is the mirror,
  That shadow and stone
Seem equally silent,
  And lifeless, and lone.

And yet 'tis a holiday!
  Hark to the bells
The old Campanile
  With melody swells.
From pestilent alleys,
  Dark, narrow, and warm,
Across the Rialto
  The multitudes swarm.
The bridges—four hundred—
  Are teeming with life,
The maid and the lover,
  The husband and wife,

The master and servant,
  The old and the young,
Come forth to the sunshine,
  The joy-bells are rung;
St. Marc's fair piazza,
  Feels warmth on its breast;
A flash of enjoyment
  Comes breaking its rest.
The corpse has been quickened,
  It stretches its limbs;
Float banners! sound music!
  Swell—aves and hymns!

This hour, if no other,
  Shall Venice be gay,
St. Marc is her patron,
  And this is his day.
His temple and basilisk
  Opens its doors,

And round the high altar
  The multitude pours.
Be of it, and enter!
  And leave until morn
The halls of the Doges
  So dim and forlorn.
Why linger with shadows,
  When substance is fled?
The living are with us—
  Come out from the dead!

Vainly! oh, vainly!
  Their works are around,
Their deeds and memorials
  Encumber the ground.
Ten centuries whisper,
  And start from the stones,
Greeks, Romans, Venetians,
  Dominions and thrones.

Their heroes still scarlet,
  With blood which they spilt,
Their doges empurpled
  With glory and guilt,
Gleam out from the casement;
  They stand by the wall,
They start from the Duomo,
  They brood over all.

'Tis holiday! holiday!
  Festival dear,
Beloved of the people,
  And first of the year.
Old Venice rejoicing
  Kneels down at the shrine,
And prays for protection
  And favour divine;
Leaves trouble behind it—
  Shuts business at home,

To hear the Archbishop
  Sing mass in the Dome.

Archbishop and Cardinal—
  Lo! he appears
Arrayed in his purple,
  A king 'mid his peers—
But laden, deep laden,
  O'erladen with years!
He totters, he trembles—
  He creeps to his place,
His eighty dark winters
  Beshading his face.
They robe him—and crown him;
  They kneel at his feet,
And bishops and deacons
  Their aves repeat.
Old, withered, and feeble,
  They nod as they go,

Their eyes lacking lustre,
  Their heads like the snow;
And incense is scattered,
  And music is poured,
And voices are blended
  In praise to the Lord.

Be calm, oh, my spirit!
  What though at the shrine
The prayers which they utter
  May differ from thine:
A thought may unite them—
  A thought unexpress'd,
Inspiring and lifting,
  And filling the breast.
The form of the worship
  Is rind on the bole,
The fruit of religion
  Is Love in the soul.

Oh! selfish and wayward!
  Oh! fancy run wild,
That will not and may not
  Be trained like a child,
But wanders and frolics,
  Like breeze on the hill,
To cloudland or daisy,
  Wherever it will!
It sails with the music
  To seas without bound,
It floats in the sunshine,
  In darkness is drowned;
It climbs the high organ
  Up mountains of sound;
Now hears the white pinions
  That ruffle the air,
And voices angelic
  That mingle in prayer;
Then earthwards descending,
  Goes gathering flowers,

And welcomes the cuckoo
  Returned to her bowers;
Then launched upon waters,
  Goes down on the streams,
To regions ecstatic
  Of slumber and dreams.

Breathe gently, sweet music!
  Sound faintly afar!
Fall, melody, softly,
  Like light from a star!
Melt, harmonies, lovingly!
  Fuse into one,
Like dew-drops on rose-leaves,
  Like dawn in the sun;
Like friends re-united
  When perils are pass'd;
Like lovers long parted,
  Made happy at last;—

Dissever to mingle
  Like fond lips, when coy,
And blend all your echoes
  In Beauty and Joy!
In Beauty? aye—ever!
  But Joy—nevermore!
The music is mournful
  As waves on the shore,
As streams that are falling,
  As moan of the wind,
Or whisper of angels
  Who pity mankind.

Oh, music enchantress!
  Thy magic instil!
I yield thee my spirit
  To guide at thy will.
Thy thoughts shall impress me,
  Thy meaning be mine,
Clear-voyant; deep-diving—
  I see the Divine—

Time, Space, and Obstruction
  No longer control,
And vision elysian
  Comes down to my soul!

And what were thy visions,
  Oh! dreamer of dreams?
The daylight came prying,
  And dulled them with beams.
Too shapeless for Reason,
  Though born in its light,
They paled into phantoms
  In memory's night.
Dim phantoms of banners
  For conquest unfurled,
Of brows bright with diamonds,
  Of bosoms empearl'd,
Of Venice, the mistress
  And Queen of the world;

Of argosies laden
  With damask and gold,
Of tributes barbaric
  From kingdoms grown old;
Of spousals fantastic
  And rings in the tide;
Of Venice the bridegroom,
  And Ocean the bride,
So mingled together
  That nought could divide.

Then changing and fading,
  And thawing to death,
'Mid tearful lamenting
And tardy repenting,
  That struggled for breath.
'Mid sobbings of women
  And voices of wail,
And grief-laden echoes
  Borne far on the gale;

'Mid headless Falieros,
  Each ghost in its shroud,
That paced round the Duomo,
  Unseen of the crowd;
'Mid prisoners' clanking
  Their chains as they crept,
And maids who dishevelled
  Their hair as they wept;—
While louder and clearer,
  And rising to fall,
A dirge and a requiem
  Were heard over all;—
A dirge for dead Venice,
  So fair in decay,
A sigh for the glory
  Departed for aye—
Desolate! Desolate!
  Faded away!

Venice, April, 1855.

III.

THE OLD MAGDALEN AT ST. STEPHAN'S.

Despised and wretched, poor and old,
And shivering in the winter cold;
So squalid, and tattered, so bare and thin,
I have a heart and a hope within.
I thread each day the crowded street
With weary and uncertain feet;
And ever the well-clad passers-by,
With vacant or reproachful eye,
Look down on my rags, or step aside
For fear their garments, or their pride
Should catch a spot of dirt or shame,
From the wretch, the hag without a name,
Who crawls in their sunlight as they go;

But let them pass! they little know
How boils the lava down below!
Or how the heart-strings of the poor,
Can throb with passion—yet endure!

Aye! let them pass! not quite forlorn,
I can repay them, scorn for scorn!
Not scorn! ah, no! sweet Magdalen!
And Mary, mother; Queen of men;
Dear women! purest saints in Heaven!
Pray that my boast may be forgiven!
'Tis human weakness, lingering still,
A thought that comes against the will.
Forgive it; scorn is not for me,
With seventy years of misery;
So vile, so wicked, and so weak
Oh, Mary! hear me when I speak;
Oh, Virgin Mary! angel mine;
Look on me with those eyes divine;
I feel them burn! I feel them shine!

The husk shall rot that swathes me now;
I shall be beautiful as thou,
Engirt in glory as in balm,
And wear the crown, and bear the palm!

Here in the aisles of Saint Stephan,
Before the bleeding "God-in-Man,"
My seventy years, my daily pain,
My poverty, my guilt's deep stain,
Roll from me like the stormy rain;
And leave me young and lily-white,
A flower to blossom in the light,
Of heavenly glories infinite.

For me! for me! ever for me,
The deep-toned organ, like a sea
Of mystery, surging on mine ears,
Reveals the music of the spheres;
And wafts me on its waves and tides
To heaven's own gate, among the brides,

Who, in white garments, strewn with stars,
Look humbly through the golden bars,
Until they hear the Bridegroom say:—
"Your place awaits you; come away;—
Come in, for ever bright and young!
Your crowns are made; your harps are strung;
Come in and walk the sapphire floor—
Blessed;—thrice blessed evermore!"

For me, the mean, the scorned, the base,
Are pomp and splendour, power and grace;
For me the incense-bearers fling
More sweets than load the breath of Spring;—
For me the holy bishops sing;
For me their anthems, low or loud,
Stream like the sunshine through the cloud;
For me their chants like billows roar,
Or melt like ripples on the shore;
For me the choir, so childlike fair,

With golden locks of flowing hair,
And flute-like hymns that pierce the air,
Mingle, amid the bass profound,
Their voices—now afloat—now drowned,—
And now upsoaring, as if wings
Were lent them by the King of Kings,
To fly beyond this earthly cell,
Right up to Heaven ineffable!

Mine are the robes, the priests, the shrines,
The altars, and the aisles' long lines;
The windows purple, red, and green,
All radiant with celestial sheen,
That seize the sun-robe by its hems,
And twist or cut it into gems.
Mine are the sculptured saints sublime,
The lamps, the pictures, the rich rhyme,
The myrrh, the manna, and the blooms,
Of mingling incense and perfumes!

Come, queen! come, empress! come and wear
A thousand diamonds in your hair;
Come with your eyes more bright than they;
Bring youth, health, strength, and rich array,
And dazzle all the crowd that see;
Kneel down!—you cannot dazzle me!—
Here, on this pavement, bending low,
I am your equal!—If not so
I rise above you by my woe!
By woe, by patience, and by love,
Of Magdalen, sweet saint above;
Who suffered, sinned, and wept as I,
And pleads my pardon in the sky.

Vienna, April, 1855.

IV.

THE COLUMN OF LUXOR.

I.

H! grey-headed column of Luxor!
Oh! ancient and eloquent stone!
hat standest supreme in thy sadness
'Mid splendour and glare—but alone!
hey brought thee with pomp and rejoicing,
A trophy to pamper their fame;
'ith sound of the drum and the trumpet,
And salvos, and shouts of acclaim:
h! preach to this change-loving people
From depths of thy memories vast,
nd, proud as they are of the present,
Tell them the past!

II.

Yet, no, it were idle to show them
  The waifs and the shipwrecks of Time;—
They know that the mighty have perished,
  Laid low in their folly or crime.
They know that the kingdoms and empires
  That grew in the ages of old
Were swept from their places, like footmarks
  On sands where the ocean has rolled.
Tradition itself has forgot them,
  Their deeds and their names disappear,
Or live but in falsified echoes,
    Vexing the ear.

III.

They know that Sesostris and Pharaoh
  Were lords of the world in their day;
That Babylon, Luxor, and Memphis
  Were haughty—yet vanished away.

The tree was unsound, and it perished;
  The fruit had a worm at the core;
The ship had no pilot to guide it,
  And broke on the shoals of the shore.
Oh! eloquent stone of the desert,
  Such teachings are idle and vain,
And fall on a storm-troubled ocean
    Lightly as rain.

IV.

Speak home to their business and passions!—
  Though Egypt was fated to fall,
And Carthage, and Greece, and Phœnicia,
  Are deaf as the dead to our call;—
Though Rome disappeared like a vapour,
  The men of to-day will not see
The fate of the past in the present,
  Or know that what was, is to be.
The multitude surge in thy shadow;—
  They roar in their ebb and their flow,

And, puffed with the wind of their greatness,
Shout as they go :—

V.

"Our France is the Empress of nations,
Her grandeur is yet in its birth,
Her people are wisest and bravest,
The pride and example of earth.
She fills the wide world with her glory;—
She speaks—and her rivals are dumb;
And all she achieves is an omen
Of greater achievements to come.
Immortal in youth and in wisdom,
She turns her calm face to the sky,
And Ruin, unable to smite her,
Passes her by."

VI.

And yet, only twenty short summers
Have bloomed since thou camest to France;

Come! tell them the scenes thou hast witnessed,
  To warn them of change and of chance!
They bore thee—a pledge of their triumph—
  From shores where their fathers had bled;
They raised thee 'mid thunder of cannon,
  And tricoloured banners outspread.
The King, with his courtiers and children,
  Looked round him, exulting and proud,
And said, "I am firm! I am happy!
      Mine is the crowd."

VII.

Again came a multitude thronging—
  Ashamed of the idol they made,
And lo! the great King and his glory—
  Came down to the dust—as they bade!
He fled, though with none to pursue him—
  And left not a relic behind;
Neither son, nor successor, nor mourner;—
  Dried leaf, on the popular wind!—

His throne made a bonfire for outcasts,
And blood-sprinkled beggars lay down,
And trailed through the filth of the gutter,
Ermine and crown.

VIII.

They set up a King to succeed him,
King Liberty, Monarch adored;
They told him to rule as it pleased him,
And gave him for sceptre, a sword.
They throned him, and crowned him with garla
And knelt at his feet in the mire,
And called him the saviour of nations,
Their model, their friend, their desire.
King Liberty, drunken and frantic,
Let Anarchy loose on his slaves,
And plundered and murdered his people,
Dancing on graves.

IX.

And they called in their desperate anguish,
  For a potent and resolute will;
For a man with a heart made of iron,
  For a hand that was ready to kill;
For a master to curb and to conquer,
  This pestilent Lord of the streets,
To chain him, and gag him, and scourge him,
  Or ship him to tropical heats.
And losing their senses in terror,
  They cried from the depths of despair,
"Oh! save us, thou man of the sabre!
    Strike, do not spare!"

X.

The master they wanted was ready—
  His sceptre and crown were decreed,
And vaulting aloft like a horseman,
  Who knows how to govern his steed,

He trampled the earth like a Centaur,
And trod his opponents to dust,
While the millions, vainglorious and grateful,
Cried "Viva! In thee is our trust!
In *thee* is our trust, oh Napoleon!
The rabble are wicked and blind:—
Far better one ruler than many—
Lash them and bind!"

XI.

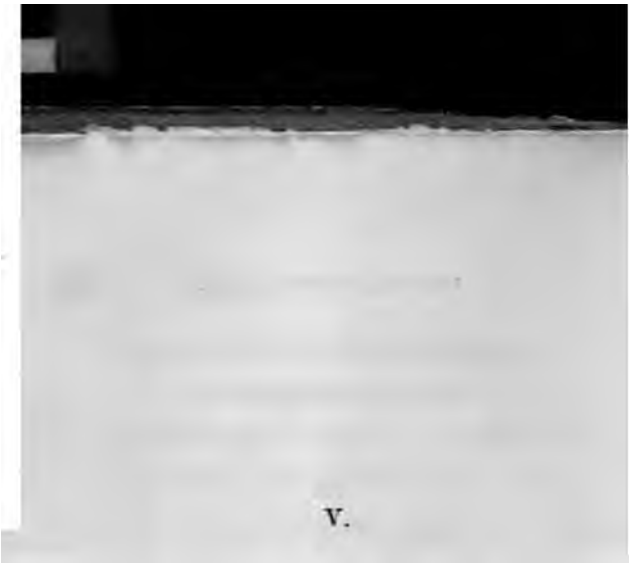
He bettered the lesson they taught him,—
And rode to his stirrups in gore,
And Anarchy's carcase lies bleeding,
Unburied, with none to deplore.
He gives them permission to barter,—
To labour, to plod, and to thrive,
To gamble, to cheat, to adventure,
To sing, and to dance, and to wive.
But woe on their heads, if presuming,
They dare but to reason, and think!

Is *He* not the Lord of opinion?—
Back from the brink!—

XII.

Back! back! from the brink of Destruction!—
Back! back to your counters and wares—
Grow fat, crying "Long live Napoleon;"
And leave him his crown and his cares!—
Oh! grey-headed column of Luxor!
Oh! ancient and eloquent stone!
That standest 'mid spendour and beauty,
So desolate, awful, and lone—
Go, preach to this change-loving people—
From depths of thy memories vast,
And proud, as they are of the present,
Show them the past!

Paris, 1853.



V.

PANIC AT THE BOURSE.

I.

BUILD your Tower of Babel,
  Oh, ye busy crowds,
Ye are deft and able,
Strong, and sure, and stable—
  Build it to the clouds.
Build with gold and paper,
  Stock, and share, and scrip,
Broad at base, and taper
  As a sailing ship.
Build it up—we pray you try—
Right through Cloudland to the sky.

II.

Though the plan bewilders—
Mason, tiler, smith,
Hewers, drawers, gilders,
Oh, ye joyous builders,
Ye are men of pith!
Eager-hearted strivers
That can toil and sweat,
Deep and keen contrivers,
Getting but to get;
Build your Babel, high and great,
Strong and durable as Fate.

III.

Fortune's utmost malice
Finds you tough to slay,
To her shafts grown callous,
In your lofty palace
Working night and day!

Palace! No, an altar,
Raised for Mammon's self,
Where each word you falter
Is a psalm of pelf.
Shrine of Lucre—holy Fane—
High Cathedral of St. Gain!

IV.

Hark! the voices roaring!
Hark! the Babel din!
'Tis an anthem soaring,
'Tis a loud adoring,
Stoop—and enter in.
Mockery! Illusion!
Furious caps and bells!
Madness, rout, confusion!
Cries, and hoots, and yells!
Like a tide the people go—
Frantic, heaving to and fro!

V.

Shall the rattling thunder
  Shake it, base or roof?
Or the earthquake under
Rend the walls asunder?—
  Walls—destruction proof?
Shall the sands entomb it,
  Or the waters drown?
Or the fire consume it,
  Till it topple down?
"No!" a myriad voices cry,
"Great is Mammon! lift him high!"

VI.

Oh! ye soap-sud blowers,
  Pause and look around!
Oh! ye hazard-throwers,
Loungers, comers, goers,
  Hear ye not a sound?

Sturdy knaves and schemers,
Confident and bold!
Dupes and silly dreamers!
Ye are bought and sold.
Hark! a whisper far away!
Lo! a shadow on the day!

VII.

Why should whispers fill you
With such cold affright?
Ye are dumb—what will you?
Shall a shadow kill you,
Oh, ye men of might?
'Tis the Monster PANIC,
Looming large and near,
Breathing vague tyrannic
Frenzies in each ear!
Who are dross? and who are scum?
None can tell us—Panic's come.

VIII.

Oh, the foul example!
  Oh, the selfish town!
In this earth so ample
Wherefore crush and trample
  Each his neighbour down?
Hark! the shouts and curses!
  Hark! the wildering cry!
Close your yawning purses,
  Men of gold, and fly!
Fly, and hide in caves and holes,
Happy if you save your souls.

IX.

Towers their turrets lifting,
  Carved with rare device,
Feel a sudden shifting,
As of basements drifting
  On a floe of ice.

Then a stifled rumbling,
Then a crash and fall,—
Down comes Babel tumbling,
Dome and towers and all!
Dig amid the whirling dust—
There is something left—we trust.

X.

Nothing worth the trouble,
Only stocks and shares,
Powdered dirt and rubble,
Paper, rags, and stubble,
And a few despairs!
Contracts and debentures
For the winter's fire,
Waifs of wrecked adventures
Stranded in the mire.
Nothing else in whole or parts;
Nothing—but the broken hearts.

Paris, 1854.

VI.

T WAS DONE WITH THE SAINTS AT ST. OUEN.

ıe early period of the French Revolution, when France rself opposed single-handed to the whole of Europe, twelve ıatues of the Apostles which adorned the fine cathedral of ı at Rouen, were, by order of the "Committee of Public cast into cannon. Some portion of the bronze was coined ı. The furnace was erected in the middle aisle of the l.]

I.

PILE the fagots on the fire,
  Blow the bellows—louder blow!
Pile the fagots higher! higher!
  Make the old cathedral glow!
There is work that needs our hand;
                Hoy! oh!
There is work that needs our hand,
If we'd help our native land,
Strip, and do, and understand.
                Hoy! oh!

II.

Lo! the Saints in every niche
  Seem to watch us down below;
Honest Saints! ye'll make us rich,
  When ye melt like summer snow!
Ye have never served the State;—
                Hoy! oh!
Ye have never served the State,
But you must—though high and great—
Yield as we do to your fate.
                Hoy! oh!

III.

Pile the coal! the fagots raise!
  See how grimly, in a row,
They look downwards at the blaze;
  'Twould be strange if they could know
To what uses they must come;—
                Hoy! oh!

To what uses they must come,
When in seas of fire they've swum,
And are comrades of the drum!
Hoy! oh!

IV.

Hoist! and lift them to the earth—
Bind them tightly, top and toe,—
They are heavy in the girth;
Solid brass, a ton or so.
Round their necks affix a chain;—
Hoy! oh!
Round their necks affix a chain;
And for fear it snap or strain,
Link it round and round again!
Hoy! oh!

V.

What a creaking and a rout!
Oil the pulleys as they go;—

This is Peter! Stand about—
And the cock that cannot crow—
Put his Saintship in the flames;—
Hoy! oh!
Put his Saintship in the flames;
And the next, Saint John or James—
But what signify their names!
Hoy! oh!

VI.

In the furnace let them warm,
Till the fire to fury grow;
And with roar, like wintry storm,
When the pine trees feel it blow,
Bite and lick them till they run;—
Hoy! oh!
Bite and lick them till they run,
And are mingled into one,
Like the ice-drops in the sun.
Hoy! oh!

VII.

They are molten in a mass:
  Stir the liquor to and fro—
Till the brave obedient brass,
  In a burning torrent flow,
To the pit and to the mould;—
                Hoy! oh!
To the pit and to the mould,
To the darkness and the cold,
To arise both new and old,—
                Hoy! oh!

VIII.

Old in substance, new in shape,
  Form'd for service, not for show,
And to pour forth shot and grape,
  Open throated on the foe!
Saints of marble cannot fight—
                Hoy! oh!

Saints of marble cannot fight,
But the bronze when cast aright,
Can put enemies to flight.
Hoy! oh!

IX.

Pile the coal upon the fire,
All your logs and fagots throw,
Pile them higher! higher! higher!
Make the old cathedral glow,
And the brass the guns refuse—
Hoy! oh!
And the brass the guns refuse,
Far too plentiful to lose,
We will coin it into *sous*.
Hoy! oh!

X.

Peter's pence to pay the brave,—
Not the tribute which we owe,

Nor the right which they may crave,
  But the best we can bestow!
Let our enemies advance,—
                Hoy! oh!
Let our enemies advance,—
And we'll lead them all a dance,
Then Huzza! Huzza! for France!
                Hoy! oh!

VII.

THE PAGEANT IN THE BEECH-TREE AVENUE.

I.

In the fair November,
Glowing like an ember,
All its leaves fire-colour'd,
  By the summer's breath;—
Lovely 'mid its sorrow,
As a young May-morrow
In its lusty triumph
  Over wintry Death,
Were it not for thinking
  Of the dark To-be;
I beheld a pageant,
  Beautiful to see,

A pageant and a vision,
  In the public way,
Underneath the shadows,
  In the noon of day.

II.

Many things I pondered,
As alone I wandered,
Up to Castle Mowbray,
  Through the beech-tree walks;
Under leafy net-work
Domed, like gothic fret-work
In cathedral archways,
  On their pillar'd stalks.
To my silent fancy,
  Earth had borrow'd gloom
From the western turret,
  And its darkened room;

Where the Lord of Mowbray,
  Dying, if not dead,
'Mid his weeping children,
  Lay upon his bed.

III.

Through the woodland hoary,
With autumnal glory,
Pass'd a slow procession
  To the castle-gate;
Earls and barons olden,
Silver knights and golden,
Clad in clanking armour,
  Haughty and sedate:
First with lifted vizor,
  Fiery-eyed, but pale,
Rode the line's great founder,
  Stiff with burnished mail.

Him there followed nobles,
  Courtiers, cavaliers,
Warriors, hunters, judges,
  Orators and peers.

IV.

In their spectral glances
I could read romances,—
Terrible life-secrets,
  Ransacked from the tomb.
Some rode bold and lusty,
Grasping falchions trusty;
Others, old and feeble,
  Shivered in the gloom;
Some like simple burghers,
  Passed in russet brown;
Some wore silk and velvet,
  Some the wig and gown;

Some were robed in purple,
As for feast and dance,
And others, as for battle,
Poised the heavy lance.

V.

Well I knew their faces;
On them, in their places,
In the hall of portraits,
In their oaken frames,
I had gazed untiring,
Curious and inquiring,
Groping out their story,
And their ancient names.
One had sailed with Richard
To the Holy Land;
One waylaid in travel,
Fell by robber's hand

One had died a traitor
  On the fatal block,
And many for their country,
  In the battle-shock.

VI.

One had slain his brother,
Darling of his mother,
And, in late repentance,
  Donn'd the priestly stole;
One, with dice and horses,
And all evil courses,
Damag'd fame and fortune,
  And perchance his soul;
One, of heart aspiring,
  Woo'd and won a queen;
One the miller's daughter,
  On the village green.

Some looked round in marriage,
  Others looked above;—
While twenty wed for money,
  And two or three for love.

VII.

One in hour of danger,
From his home a stranger,
Fled the State commotions,
  That might overwhelm;
One had served the nation,
In its desolation—
Hurling in the senate,
  Words that rouse a realm.
One had sold his honour
  For a monarch's smile;
One, on seat of judgment,
  Braving fraud and guile,

And all force opposing,
Dared unrighteous power
To touch the people's freedom,
Their heritage and dower.

VIII.

Through the Norman portal,
Rode the grey, immortal,
Shadowy, spectral fathers,
Sadly one by one;
Them there followed, slowly,
With meek eyes, and lowly,
Sorrow-pale, a mother,
Weeping for her son;
In her morn of beauty
Seventy years before,
She had died in childbirth,
And the babe she bore,

Old, on death-bed lying,
  Pray'd, and faintly smil'd,
Yielding up his spirit
  Calmly as a child.

IX.

Flashes evanescent,
Pale, and phosphorescent,
Lit the western turret
  Suddenly as thought;
Voices seemed replying,
To the sere leaves sighing,
As the wind among them
  Crept along distraught—
As beneath the archway,
  Pass'd that mother fair,
With her glancing shoulders,
  And her auburn hair,

And her pallid features,
  Which the grave had kiss'd,
And her trailing garments,
  Thin as morning mist.

X.

Entering in sadness!
Issuing in gladness!
Through the gate, unopened,
  Shivering on its hinge,
Out she came resplendent,
With a soul attendant,
Wearing clouds for vesture,
  And the stars for fringe.
Young and lovely mother!
  Son of ancient years!
Tenderly she led him,
  Smiling through her tears;

Striving to support him
With a loving hand,
And pointing, with raised finger,
To the spirit-land.

XI.

Following in order,
Down the beechen border,
Rode the ancestral phalanx;
Till the passing bell,
With the dead condoling,
Through the village tolling,
From the castle turret,
Boomed its solemn knell.
And a wind up-curling,
Faintly from the ground,
Stirred the beech-tree branches
With a whispering sound;

And, like darkness melting,
At the face of day,
All the ghostly pageant
Waned and died away.

November, 1855.

VIII.

THE ROMAN GIRL.

I.

Fair maid of Italia,
  How lovely art thou!
Erect is thy bearing,
  Serene is thy brow.
Yet deep in thy bosom
  A mystery lies,
And Ætnas of passion
  Look forth at thine eyes.

II.

We gaze on thy beauty,
  And deem at its shrine,
The soul of thy country
  Is mirror'd in thine.

P. 14

THE ROMAN GIRL.

Front.

That such as thou standest,
  The image might be,
Of Rome in her beauty,
  Sad, earnest, and free.

III.

If such be thy peasants,
  Oh, heart-stricken Rome!
From children unborn
  Will deliverance come.
If such be thy maidens,
  Look up through thy tears,
And trust, O Italia,
  The birth of the years!

IV.

Thy foes may oppress thee,
  Thy friends may betray,
And both may be banded
  To spoil and to slay;

And long thou mayst suffer
In darkness and doubt,
For errors committed,
Within and without.

V.

But sooner or later
The day-star will rise,
To shine through the tempests
That darken thy skies.
The sons of these mothers
Shall struggle again;
Learn wisdom, Italia,
Nor struggle in vain.

IX.

THE LAMENT OF CONA, FOR THE UNPEOPLING OF SCOTLAND.

I.

Low o'er Ben Nevis, the mists of the sunrise are trailing;
Dimly he stands by the tempests of centuries worn;
Lonely Lochaber and grey Ballahulish are veiling
Their cold jagged peaks in the thick-drooping vapours of morn;
Red gleams the sun o'er the ocean,
Lochlin with angry commotion
Batters the shore, making moan in its innermost caves;
While from each mountain height,
Fed by the rains of night,
Torrents come bounding to mingle their voice with the waves.

II.

On through Glen Cona, the valley of murder and
rapine,
Dark with the crimes and the sorrows of days that
are past;
On by the track where the three giant Sphinxes of
Appin,
Loom through the moorland, unshapely, majestic,
and vast;
On by the turbulent river,
Darting the spray from her quiver,
Bounding and rolling in glory and beauty along;—
On by the rocky path,
Far through the gloomy strath,
Lonely I wander by Cona, the river of song.

III.

Cona! sad Cona! I hear the loud psalm of thy sorrow:
Wierd are thy melodies, filling with music the glen:

Dark is the day of the people, and shall no to-morrow
Gleaming with brightness bring joy to these true-hearted men?
Not for the past and its sadness,
Not for its guilt and its madness,
Mourn we, oh Cona! To-day has a grief of its own.
Forth go the young and old,
Forth go the free and bold,
Albyn is desolate! Rachael of nations! Alone!

IV.

Roll, ye dark mists, and take shape as ye marshal before me,
One is among you;—I see her, dejected and pale!
Mournful she glides;—it is Cona, who, hovering o'er me,
Chants in the roar of the stream, her lament for the Gael.
Words from her echoes are fashion'd,
Surging like pibrochs impassioned;

Mourning for Scotland—and sobbing her useless
appeals;
Sprite of the mountain stream,
Telling a truth—or dream!—
Reason is in it;—Come, hear what the spirit reveals!

V.

"Weep, Albyn, weep!" she exclaims, "for this dark
desolation;
Green are thy mountains, and blue are thy streams as
of yore;
Broad are thy valleys to feed and to nurture a nation.
Mother of nations, but nation thyself never more!
Men of strong heart and endeavour,
Sigh as they leave thee for ever;
Those who remain are down stricken, and weary, and
few;
Low in the dust they lie,
Careless to live or die;
Misery conquers them, foemen could never subdue.

VI.

nce thou wert home of a people of heroes and sages;
trong in the battle, and wise in the counsel were
they,
n in all duty, as rocks in the tempests of ages,
oving and loyal, and honest and open as day.
Pure were their actions in story,
Clear was the light of their glory,
ud were the chiefs of the clansmen who came to
their call;
Proud of their race and laws;
Proud of their country's cause;
ud of their faith, of their liberty prouder than all.

VII.

ch Highland hut was the home of domestic affection;
Honour and Industry sat at the hearth of the poor;
y prompted the day's and the night's genuflexion;
Those who felt sorrow could still be erect and endure.

Born in no bright summer bowers,
Sweet were the fair human flowers—
Maids of the Highlands, array'd in their glory of smiles;
Blessings of good men's lives,
Thrifty and sober wives,
Mothers of heroes, the charm and the pride of the Isles.

VIII.

"Where are they now? Tell us where are thy sons and thy daughters?
Albyn! Sad mother! No more in thy bosom they dwell!
Far, far away, they have found a new home o'er the waters,
Yearning for thee, with a love that no language can tell.
Cold are the hearths of their childhood,
Roofless their huts in the wild wood,

ls the red heather no more to the feet of the clan;
Where once the clachan stood,
Comes the shy grouse and brood,
ing no danger so far from the presence of man.

IX.

here the fair-headed, blue-eyed, rosy babes of the Norland
athed in the burn, making merry the long summer noon,
es the red-deer undismay'd from his haunts in the moorland,
aking his thirst, where the pool shows its breast to the moon.
Where in the days long departed,
Maidens sat singing, light-hearted,
ıds but the roar of the flood, or the whisper of rills;
Voices of human kind,
Freight not the vacant wind;
ic and laughter are mute on the tenantless hills,

X.

"Nimrods and hunters are lords of the mount and the forest,
Men but encumber the soil where their forefathers trod;
Tho' for their country they fought when its need was the sorest,
Forth they must wander, their hope not in man, but in God.
Roaming alone o'er the heather,
Nought but the bleat of the wether,
The bark of the colly, or crack of the grouse-slayer's gun,
Breaks on the lonely ear;
Land of the sheep and deer!
Albyn of heroes! The day of thy glory is done!"

XI.

Cona! sad Cona! I hear the loud psalm of thy sorrow;
Wierd are thy melodies, filling with music the glen;

Dark is the day of the people, and shall no to-morrow,
Gleaming with brightness, bring joy to these desolate men?
Yes; but not here shall they find it;
Darkness has darkness behind it;
Far o'er the rolling Atlantic the day-star shall shine;
Young o'er the western main,
Albyn shall bloom again,
Bearing new blossoms, old land! as majestic as thine.

Glencoe, August, 1854.

X.

MAN TO MAN.

I.

STAND up, man! stand!
God's over all.
Why do you cringe to me,
Why do you bend the knee,
And creep, and fawn, and crawl?
Stand up, man, stand!
If I thought our English land
Had no true-hearted poor,
To suffer—and endure—
And hold themselves erect,
In the light of their own respect,
I'd blush that I was English born,
And run away to the wilderness to free
myself from scorn.

II.

Stand up man, stand!
God made us all!
The wine transcends the froth—
The living skin, the cloth—
Both rich and poor are small.
Stand up, man, stand!
Free heart, free tongue, free hand,
Firm foot upon the sod,
And eyes that fear but God,—
Whate'er your state or name,
Let these prefer your claim!
If there be anything you want—
Speak up! we may respect a churl,
we hate a sycophant.

XI.

THE INVISIBLE CROWN.

I.

Amid the crowded streets and roar of voices,
  Unnoticed by the multitude he goes,
Alone, but watchful ;—if the world rejoices
  He smiles ; and if it weeps, he shares its woes:
But no one shares in his : his ways are lonely :—
  The millions pass him, for they cannot see,
His glory and his misery ; but only
  One of themselves ; a leaf upon the tree ;
A raindrop in the torrent ; one small grain
Washed on the stormy shore of Life's sad main.

II.

With them he is ; but of them ? Ah ! not so !
  For them are common grief and common gladness,

t he from regal heights looks down below,
And finds no comrade for his joy or sadness.
s feet are on the ways where others travel;
His breast is in the clouds; his forehead fair
d heavenward eyes that see, and would unravel
Time, Fate, and Man are in the upper air,
d catch the dawning light; but cold and stern,
cept for thoughts that ever throb and burn.

III.

ould men but hear the things which he could tell them,
Would they but own him, he were bless'd indeed;
e sorrow and the shame that once befell them,
But would befall no more, if they would heed,
ould give him joy to teach; but what care they?
They know him not; or if they did, might love him,
hate more potent did not seek to slay,
For speaking of the things too far above him,

For them to tolerate; and so he's dumb,
And broods in silence on the days to come.

IV.

And yet he knows himself to be a king—
A king without a kingdom—scorned and thro
less!
Around his brow there glows the burning ring,
Sparkling with jewels. From his lips, the moanl
Escapes a sigh, that he should wear such crown,
Such burden and such penalty of splendour,
And find mid all the myriads of the town—
No man to say, "God save him," or to render
The homage of a look. Oh, pang supreme!
A fact to him—though to the world a dream.

V.

But still he wears it as a monarch should—
By right divine; and though he might endeavou
To cast it from him,—evil more than good,

And sink into the crowd, unknown for ever,
If he could barter it for peace of mind,
And being man, go down into the valleys,
Amid the household warmth, and welcomes kind
Of children sporting in the garden alleys,
He cannot move it: God alone can take
The halo from his forehead! Let it ache!

VI.

'Tis not the pain; for well could he endure
A tenfold agony, if through the portals
Of their dim sight, men could behold him, pure—
Bearing his glory like the old Immortals.
But they are blind; or that gold crown he sees
And feels upon his forehead by its burning,
Is viewless as the wind among the trees,
Or thought unuttered to the brain returning,
And dying where it sprung. Hence comes his grief;—
Is there in Man or Nature no relief?

VII.

One word! One little word! the humblest spoken
Would make him whole!—The word is still unborn,—
Pity him Earth and Heaven! or else heart-broken
He will go down into the grave forlorn,—
Too early blighted, all his glorious thought
Dying within him.—Men who boast of seeing,
Look in his heart—and tell us, wisdom-fraught,
The mystery and Beauty of his Being!
The world will gain—not he! Meantime he dies—
Looking towards the Future, and the skies.

XII.

AT A POET'S GRAVE.

I.

Let him rest! Let him rest!
With the green earth on his breast;
The daisies grow above him and the long sedge-grasses
wave.
What call or right have you,
Ye mercenary crew,
To lift the pitying veil that shrouds him in the grave?
'Tis true this man could sing,
Like lark in early spring,
Or tender nightingale, deep hidden in the bowers;—
'Tis true that he was wise,
And that his heavenward eyes,
Saw far beyond the clouds that dim this world of ours;

But is he yours, when dead,
To rake his narrow bed,
And peer into his heart for flaws, and spots, and stains?
And all because his voice
Bade multitudes rejoice,
And cheer'd Humanity amid its griefs and pains?

II.

Let him rest! Let him rest!
With the green earth on his breast,
And leave! oh leave his fame unsullied by your breath!
Each day that passes by,
What meaner mortals die;
What thousand raindrops fall into the seas of death!
No vendor of a tale,
His merchandise for sale,
Pries into evidence to show how mean were they;
No libel touches them,
No curious fools condemn;
Their human frailties sleep, for God, not man to weigh.

ıd shall the bard alone
ıve all his follies known,
from the misty past to spice a needless book,—
ıat Envy may exclaim,
mention of his name,
greatest are but small, however great they look?'

III.

t them rest, their sorrows o'er,
l the mighty bards of yore!
if, ye grubbers-up of scandals dead and gone,
find, amid the slime,
me sin of ancient time,
fault, or seeming fault, that Shakespeare might
have done;
me spot on Milton's truth,
Byron's glowing youth;
error, not too small for microscopic gaze:

Shroud it in deepest gloom,
As on your father's tomb
You'd hush the evil tongues that spoke in his dispr
Shroud it in darkest night!
Or, if compelled to write—
Tell us the inspiring tale of perils overcome:
Of struggles for the good,
Of courage unsubdued,
But let their frailties rest, and on their faults be du

Ayrshire, 1854.

XIII.

MY NEIGHBOUR.

I.

He was prudent, brave, and gentle,
  Living as a man should do;
Kept a conscience, did his duty,
  Loved his fellows—served them too.
Modest, virtuous, self-reliant,
  Rich and learned, wise and true.

II.

He had faults, perchance had many,
  But one fault above them all,
Lay like heavy lead upon him,
  Tyrant of a patient thrall—
Tyrant seen, confessed, and hated,
  Banished only to recall.

III.

"Oh! he drank?" "His drink was water!"
"Gambled?" "No! he hated play."
"Then, perchance, a tenderer failing
Led his heart and head astray!"
"No! both honour and religion
Kept him in the purer way."

IV.

"Then, he scorned Life's mathematics,
Could not reckon up a score,
Pay his debts, or be persuaded
Two and two were always four."
"No! he was exact as Euclid,
Prompt and punctual—no one more."

V.

"Oh! a miser?" "No!"—"Too lavish?"
"Worst of guessers, guess again!"
"No! I'm weary hunting failures;

Was he seen of mortal ken,
Paragon of marble virtues,
Quite a model man of men?"

VI.

"At his birth an evil spirit
Charms and spells around him flung,
And, with well concocted malice,
Laid a curse upon his tongue;
Curse that daily made him wretched,
Earth's most wretched sons among.

VII.

"He could plead, expound, and argue;
Fire with wit, with wisdom glow;
But one word for ever failed him,
Source of all his pain and woe,
Luckless wight! he could not say it—
Could not—dared not answer No!"

XIV.

THE KINDLY WINTER.

The snow lies deep upon the ground,
In coat of mail the pools are bound;
The hungry rooks in squadrons fly,
And winds are slumbering in the sky.

Drowsily the snow-flakes fall;
The robin on the garden wall
Looks wistful at our window-pane,
The customary crumb to gain.

On barn, and thatch, and leafless tree,
The frost has hung embroidery,
Fringe of ice and daglets fine,
Of filagree and crystalline.

THE *KINDLY* WINTER. P. 174.

But nought care we, though o'er the wold
The winter lays his finger cold;
We still enjoy the roughest day,
And find December good as May.

Pile up the fire! the wandering wind,
Although it nip, is not unkind;
And dark midwinter days can bring
As many pleasures as the spring.

If not the flow'ret budding fair,
And mild effulgence of the air,
They give the glow of indoor mirth,
And social comfort round the hearth.

Pile up the fire! When storms are rude,
We feel the joy of gratitude;
And thankful for the good possess'd,
Have welcomes for the poorest guest.

The gloomy Winter—who is he?
I never saw him on the lea,
I never met him on my path,
Or trow'd old stories of his wrath.

The Winter is a friend of mine,
His step is light, his eyeballs shine;
His cheek is ruddy as the morn,
He carols like the lark in corn.

His tread is brisk upon the snows—
His pulses gallop as he goes;
He hath a smile upon his lips,
With songs and welcome, jests and quips.

A charitable soul is he,
His heart is large, his hand is free;
He brings the beggar to his door,
And feeds the needy from his store.

The friend of every living thing,
Old Winter—sire of youthful Spring—
The glooms upon his brow that dwell,
Are glories when we know them well.

'Tis he that feeds the April buds,
'Tis he that clothes the Summer woods;
'Tis he makes plump the Autumn grain,
And loads with wealth the creaking wain.

Pile up the fire! and ere he go,
Our blessings on his head shall flow.
The hale old Winter, bleak and sere,
The friend and father of the year.

XV.

THE POPLAR LEAVES.

I.

On the topmost twig where the winds blow free,
There were three leaves on the poplar tree,
Lonely! Lonely!
The summer had gone, and left them there,
To crimple and sigh 'mid the branches bare,
Lonely! Lonely!
Down by the fateful breezes whirled,
On the cold earth crisp and curled,
Amid the grass by the night-dews sodden,
All their old companions lay;—
Alas for the glory past away
And the strength down trodden!

II.

"There's life in the air," said one of the trine,
"And wholesome days in the autumn shine,
"Lonely! Lonely!
"Though die we must, nor ever know
"How warm the sweet spring breezes blow,
"Lonely! Lonely!
"There's freshness yet in the woodlands wild;
"I hear the laughter of a child,
"And the lilt of the lark upsoaring;—
"Though days are cold, and nights are long,
"November finds us hale and strong,
"We'll cease for the dead deploring."

III.

A sudden breeze came twirling by,
Betwixt the tree-tops and the sky;—
Lonely! Lonely!

And the garrulous leaf that spoke so well,
Dying, into its bosom fell ;—
Lonely! Lonely!
"She's dead! poor soul!" said one of the twain—
"She was but frail; but we remain;—
"Oh, sister mine, we'll die together!
"On poplar boughs no more shall wave
"Leaves, like the lost ones in the grave!—
"There's Death in the winter weather!"

IV.

Again the wind came up the lea,
And rustling through the poplar tree,
Lonely! Lonely!
Bore the last leaves on its breast
Low to the damp earth, where they rest,
Lonely! Lonely!
"To hear these little creatures moan,"
Said the poplar tree with pitying tone,

To the breeze through its branches flying,
"You'd think;—may kindly heaven forefend!
"That leaves and trees were at an end,
"And Nature lay a-dying!"

XVI.

THE SOULS OF THE CHILDREN.

I.

"Who bids for the little children,—
  Body, and soul, and brain?
Who bids for the little children—
  Young and without a stain?
Will no one bid," said England,
  "For their souls so pure and white,
And fit for all good or evil,
  The world on their page may write?"

II.

"We bid," said Pest and Famine,
  "We bid for life and limb;
Fever and pain and squalor
  Their bright young eyes shall dim.

When the children grow too many,
  We'll nurse them as our own,
And hide them in secret places,
  Where none may hear their moan."

III.

"I bid," said Beggary, howling,
  "I bid for them, one and all!
I'll teach them a thousand lessons—
  To lie, to skulk, to crawl!
They shall sleep in my lair, like maggots,
  They shall rot in the fair sunshine;
And if they serve my purpose,
  I hope they'll answer thine."

IV.

"And I'll bid higher and higher,"
  Said Crime with wolfish grin,
"For I love to lead the children
  Through the pleasant paths of sin.

They shall swarm in the streets to pilfer,
  They shall plague the broad highway,
Till they grow too old for pity,
  And ripe for the law to slay.

V.

"Prison and hulk and gallows
  Are many in the land,
'Twere folly not to use them,
  So proudly as they stand.
Give *me* the little children—
  I'll take them as they're born,
And feed their evil passions
  With misery and scorn.

VI.

"Give *me* the little children,
  Ye good, ye rich, ye wise,
And let the busy world spin round,
  While ye shut your idle eyes;

And your judges shall have work,
  And your lawyers wag the tongue,
And the gaolers and policemen
  Shall be fathers to the young.

VII.

"I and the Law, for pastime,
  Shall struggle day and night;
And the Law shall gain, but I shall win,
  And we'll still renew the fight:
And ever and aye we'll wrestle,
  Till Law grow sick and sad,
And kill in its desperation,
  The incorrigibly bad.

VIII.

"I, and the Law, and Justice,
  Shall thwart each other still;
And hearts shall break to see it;—
  And innocent blood shall spill!

So leave,—oh, leave the children
To Ignorance and Woe—
And I'll come in and teach them
The way that they should go."

IX.

"Oh, shame!" said true Religion,
"Oh, shame that this should be!
I'll take the little children,
I'll take them all to me:
I'll raise them up with kindness
From the mire in which they're trod;
I'll teach them words of blessing,
I'll lead them up to God."

X.

"You're *not* the true Religion,"
Said a Sect with flashing eyes;
"Nor thou," said another scowling,
"Thou'rt heresy and lies."

"You shall not have the children,"
  Said a third with shout and yell;
"You're Antichrist and bigot—
  You'd train them up for hell."

XI.

And England, sorely puzzled
  To see such battle strong,
Exclaimed, with voice of pity,
  "Oh, friends, you do me wrong!
Oh, cease your bitter wrangling;
  For, till you all agree,
I fear the little children
  Will plague both you and me."

XII.

But all refused to listen;
  Quoth they—"We bide our time;"
And the bidders seized the children—
  Beggary, Filth, and Crime;

And the prisons teemed with victims,
And the gallows rocked on high;
And the thick abomination
Spread reeking to the sky.

XVII.

THE OLD MEN PLAYING.

I.

Bear lightly on their foreheads, Time!
  Strew roses on their way,
The young in heart, however old,
  Who prize the present day,
And, wiser than the pompous proud,
  Are wise enough to play.

II.

I love to see a man forget
  His blood is growing cold,
And leap or swim, or gather flowers,
  Oblivious of his gold;

And mix with children in their sport,
Nor think that he is old.

III.

I love to see the man of care
Take pleasure in a toy;
I love to see him row or ride,
And tread the grass with joy,
Or hunt the flying cricket-ball
As lusty as a boy.

IV.

All sports that spare the humblest pain,
That neither maim nor kill;
That lead us to the quiet field,
Or to the wholesome hill,
Are duties which the pure of heart
Religiously fulfil.

V.

Though some may laugh that full-grown men
  May frolic in the wood,
Like children let adrift from school;—
  Not mine the scornful mood;—
I honour human happiness,
  And deem it gratitude.

VI.

The road of life is hard enough,
  Bestrewn with slag and thorn;
I would not mock the simplest joy
  That made it less forlorn,
But fill its evening path with flowers
  As fresh as those of morn.

VII.

'Tis something, when the Noon has passed,
  To brave the touch of Time,—

And say, "Good friend, thou harm'st me not,
My soul is in its prime;—
Thou canst not chill my warmth of heart;—
I carol while I climb."

VIII.

Give us but health and peace of mind,
Whate'er our clime or clan,
We'll take delight in simple things,
Nor deem that sports unman;—
And let the proud, who scorn to laugh,
Despise us if they can!

XVIII.

MIDNIGHT WATCH AT WALMER CASTLE.

I.

l! most beautiful! the calm, clear stars
on us, through the soundless deeps of time:
ning sea strikes chafing on the bars
restraining land; its voice sublime
sonorous music evermore—
chant, a requiem, on the shore.

II.

he lonely room, where sleeps in death
's great hero—friend of human kind—
e no sounds but Ocean's, save a breath,
and low, of the expiring wind;

And at short intervals the measured beat,
Solemn and slow, of the night-watcher's feet.

III.

These sounds but mark the silence, as pale lights
In deep, wide darkness, show it darker still.
All silently, from out the heavenly heights,
The stars look down on human joy or ill;
All beauteously the Night pursues her way,
And breathes her prayerful thoughts to coming Day.

IV.

To musing Fancy, Walmer's lonely pile
Seems as if conscious of her sacred trust,
She hushed to breathless awe the moaning isle,
Over her Wellington's lamented dust;
Looking far out upon the restless main,
The one sad sentinel of England's pain.

V.

' sad, but yet how beautiful the scene!
'is Death that lends the music to the sea;
that High Presence, solemn and serene,
'hich robes all Nature with such sympathy;
gives the stars of heaven a voice to tell
ıgs felt, but never known—ineffable.

VI.

gaze and sigh;—but here we cannot weep;
'is Reverence and Religion, and meek Faith,
t fill us with emotion, pure and deep,
nd waft our heavenward thoughts to Life from
Death,—
Life Eternal: tears we may not shed,
are alone with Nature and the dead.

VII.

: tears shall fall to-morrow, but not here!—
Mid pomp and show, and blazonry and pride,

And slow funereal march and gorgeous bier,
  The sorrow shall have vent for him who died;—
So great, so simple, and so calmly grand—
So like the staff and father of the land.

VIII.

But, ah! not here! We can but breathe a praye
  Awed by the spiritual beauty spread around.
The foremost man of all our time lies there;
  The tree has fallen, and sanctifies the ground.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, tears may flow;
But Hope is with the stars, and chides our woe.

November, 1852.

XIX.

PROFESSOR SCHLAFHAUBE, OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG.

A PORTRAIT FROM THE LIFE.

LAZILY runs the tide of human life—
  There is no effort in our German land—
Of what avail are ceaseless moil and strife?
  Is there not time? Why move, if we can stand?
There is no object the wide world can show,
  Worth English hurry, sweat, and sore distress;
Let the moons wane and wax, and come and go,
  And let us Germans doze in happiness!

Why should we turn and spin in frantic haste
  When we have seventy years to live and dream?
Through cloud and vapour speed is perilous waste,—
  Anchor the ship, there's fog upon the stream!

XX.

FALLOW.

Alone, alone, let me wander alone!
There's an odour of hay o'er the woodlands blow
There's a humming of bees beneath the lime,
And the deep blue heaven of a Southern clime
Is not more beautifully bright
Than this English sky with its islets white,
And its alp-like clouds, so snowy fair!—
The birch-leaves dangle in balmy air;
And the elms and oaks scarce seem to know
When the whispering breezes come or go;
But the bonnie sweet-briar, she knows well;
For she has kissed them—and they tell!
And bear to all the West and South
The pleasant odours of her mouth.

FALLOW. P. 200.

Let me alone to my idle pleasure;
What do I care for toil or treasure?
To-morrow I'll work, if work you crave,
Like a king, a statesman, or a slave;
But not to-day, no! nor to-morrow,
If from my drowsy ease I borrow
No health and strength to bear my boat
Through the great life-ocean where we float.

Under the leaves, amid the grass,
Lazily the day shall pass,
Yet not be wasted. Must I ever
Climb up the hill-tops of Endeavour?
I hate you all, ye musty books!
Ye know not how the morning looks;—
Ye smell of studies long and keen;—
I'll change the white leaves for the green!
My Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope,
I'll leave them for the grassy slope,

Where other singers, sweet as they
Chant hymn, and song, and roundelay.
What do I care for Kant or Hegel,
For Leibnitz, Newton, Locke, or Schlegel?
Did they exhaust philosophy?
I'll find it in the earth or sky,
In woodbine wreaths, in ears of corn,
Or flickering shadows of the morn;
And if I gather nothing new,
At least I'll keep my spirit true
And bathe my heart in honey dew.

This day I'll neither think or read
Of great Crimean toil or deed.
To-morrow, as in days agone,
I'll pray for peace by valour won,
For speedy triumph of the right,
And Earth's repose in Love's own light.
To-day I need a truce myself
From books and men, from care and pelf,

And I will have it in cool lanes,
O'erarching like cathedral fanes,
With elm and beech of sturdy girth;
Or on the bosom of green earth
Amid the daisies;—dreaming, dozing,
Fallow, fallow, and reposing!

Betchworth, August, 1855.

XXI.

THE MAN AND THE MOUNTAIN.

THE MOUNTAIN.

Who art thou? who art thou?
Climbing up to my white brow—
But half the size of the little pine tree
That grows in the clefts below my knee?
What dost want? and what wouldst do
Between my cope and the frosty blue?
Amid my silent pinnacles
The hesitating avalanche dwells,
And issuing from my garnered snow
A hundred foaming torrents flow;—
Little creature—bold and vain,
Keep to the safety of the plain,

Nor tempt the heights, where, all alone,
I hurl the tempests from my throne.

THE MAN.

Proud mountain—since thou'st found a tongue,
Back be thy defiance flung!
Small as I am, and mighty thou,
With all thy centuries on thy brow,
I climb thy heights to make thee mine—
From thy nether forests of waving pine,
Up to thy barest steeps afar,
Where the icicles gleam to the Polar star.
What are thy crags and glaciers rude,
Unless in their pregnant solitude
They teach me things I pine to know?
What are thy pinnacles of snow,
Thy caverns where the whirlwinds grow,
And all thy rivers, so fierce and free,
Unless they minister to me?

Great and awful as thou art,
Thou art but little to my heart;
And thy supreme magnificence
Is but the creature of my sense.
True, I am smaller than the pine
That grows beneath those feet of thine;
But I'm thy master, thou not mine.
I can measure thee, up and down,
Base and girth and snowy crown;
I can weigh thee to an ounce,
And thy value can pronounce!
Nor thine alone, oh mountain high!
I can map the orbs of the sky,
And tell the distances of Heaven;—
To me—so small—to me is given
To weigh the ponderable sun,
And track the planets as they run.
And shall not *I*, thou mountain proud,
Scale thy small peaks above the cloud

Thou wert made for me to climb—
Me—the humble—yet sublime!
I am little—thou art great—
Yet what art thou, in all thy state,
Compared with me? Thou'rt but a grain
In the great ocean of my brain!
Look up to heaven, thou haughty hill!
Roll thy torrents at thy will;
Loose from thy grasp the avalanche,
And crush the forests root and branch;
But learn thy place in Nature's plan—
The slave and minister of Man.

XXII.

DREAMING! IDLY DREAMING!

I.

DREAMING! idly dreaming!
In the summer bowers,
Came a whisper stilly
From the rose and lily
And the meadow flowers.
"Tho' we bloom to woo you,"
Seemed the voice to sigh,
"Leave, oh, leave us growing,
Or like wild-winds blowing—
Touch, and travel by!
Beauty shrinks from selfish capture—
Love is short that lives on rapture,
If you gather us—we die!"

II.

Waking! sadly waking!
In the moil and strife,
Came a prompter quiet
Through the wild-world riot
And the storm of life;—
"Joys and Pleasures tempt us,"
Seemed the voice to sigh,
"But, unwisely taken,
"From their branches shaken,
"All their glories fly.
"Bright and fair, with colours golden,
"By our longing hearts beholden,
"When we gather them—they die!"

XXIII.

SAFE PREDICTIONS

I.

WHENE'ER you hear a "patriot" spouting
Incessant gall,
Of vice assured, of virtue doubting,
In great or small;
Worth, talent, honesty denying,
Except in self;
Believe him not—he may be purchased;
His price is pelf.

II.

Whene'er you see a widow weeping
In public sight,
And still in flagrant notice keeping
Her doleful plight

Aye talking of her dear departed;
One truth is plain,
She will not languish broken-hearted,
But wed again.

III.

Whene'er a rich man vows to lend you
All he has got,
Well knowing while he would befriend you,
You need him not;
You may be sure, should fate capricious
Deny you bread,
Your rich good friend, grown avaricious,
Will "cut you dead."

IV.

Whene'er a statesman, Whig or Tory,
Talks loud and long
Of serving country for the glory,
With yearning strong;

Needing no Sovereign to regard him;
Look in his face,
And be convinced that to reward him
He wants a place.

V.

Whene'er an author shows you meekly
His last new book,
And says all critics, daily, weekly,
Its faults o'erlook,
And praise it far beyond its merits—
On this decide,
He ranks himself with choicest spirits,
And bursts with pride.

VI.

Whene'er a critic o'er his duties
Still snarls and snaps;
Affirms all faults, and speaks of beauties
With cold "perhaps,"

Hunts for small flaws with keenest pleasure
From day to day;
The man's a donkey; know his measure;
And let him bray.

VII.

Whene'er a woman vows to love you
In Fortune's spite;
Makes protestations that would prove you
Her soul's delight;
Swears that no other love shall win her
By passion stirred;
Believe her not, the charming sinner
Will break her word.

VIII.

And if in this cold-hearted lyric
I seem, in sooth,
With voice ill-natured and satiric
To doubt of Truth—

Believe me not; I own her splendour
Void of offence,—
And merely struggle to defend her
From false pretence.

XXIV.

NAPOLEON AND THE SPHYNX.

I.

BENEATH him stretched the sands
Of Egypt's burning lands;
The desert panted to the swelt'ring ray;
The camel's plashing feet,
With slow, uneasy beat,
Threw up the scorching dust like arrowy spray;
And fierce the sunlight glowed,
As young Napoleon rode
Around the Gallic camp, companionless that day.

II.

High thoughts were in his mind,
Unspoken to his kind;

Calm was his face—his eyes were blank and chill;
His thin lips were compress'd,
The secrets of his breast,
Those portals never pass'd, for good or ill;
And dreaded—yet adored—
His hand upon his sword,
He mused on Destiny, to shape it to his will.

III.

"Ye haughty Pyramids!
Thou Sphynx! whose eyeless lids
On my presumptuous youth seem bent in scorn;
What though thy form has stood
Coëval with the flood,
Of all earth's monuments the earliest born;
And I, so mean and small,
With armies at my call,
Am recent in thy sight as grass of yester-morn;—

IV.

"Yet in this soul of mine
Is strength as great as thine,
O dull-eyed Sphynx that wouldst despise me now;
Is grandeur like thine own,
O melancholy stone,
With forty centuries furrowed on thy brow!
Deep in my heart I feel
What Time shall yet reveal,
That I shall tower o'er men, as o'er these deserts
thou.

V.

"I shall upbuild a name
Of never-dying fame,
My deeds shall fill the world with their renown:
To all succeeding years,
The populous hemispheres

Shall pass the record of my glories down;
And nations yet to be,
Surging from Time's deep sea,
Shall teach their babes the name of great Napoleon

VI.

"On History's deathless page,
From wondering age to age,
New light and reverence o'er that name shall glow
My deeds already done,
Are histories begun,
Whose great conclusion centuries shall not know
O melancholy Sphynx!
Present with Future links,
And both shall yet be mine. I feel it as I go!"

VII.

Over the mighty chief
There came a shadow of grief;—

The lips gigantic seemed to move and say,
"Know'st thou his name that bid
Arise yon Pyramid?
Know'st thou who placed me where I stand to-day?
Thy deeds are but as sand,
Strewn on the heedless land:
Think, little mortal, think! and pass upon thy way!

VIII.

"Pass, little mortal, pass!
Grow like the vernal grass;
The autumn sickle shall destroy thy prime!
Bid nations shout the word
Which ne'er before they heard,
The name of Glory, fearful, yet sublime;—
The Pharaohs are forgot,
Their works confess them not:
Pass, Hero! Pass, poor straw upon the gulf of Time!"

XXV.

TO ONE WHO WAS AFRAID TO SPEAK HIS MIND ON A GREAT QUESTION.

I.

SHAME upon thee, craven spirit!
  Is it manly, just, or brave,
If a truth have shone within thee,
  To conceal the light it gave;—
Captive of the world's opinion—
  Free to speak, but yet a slave?

II.

All conviction should be valiant;
  Tell thy truth, if truth it be;
Never seek to stem its current;—
  Thoughts, like rivers, find the sea;

It will fit the widening circle
  Of Eternal Verity.

III.

Speak thy thought if thou believ'st it,
  Let it jostle whom it may,
E'en although the foolish scorn it,
  Or the obstinate gainsay:
Every seed that grows to-morrow
  Lies beneath a clod to-day.

IV.

If our sires, the noble-hearted,
  Pioneers of things to come,
Had like thee been weak and timid,
  Traitors to themselves, and dumb,
Where would be our present knowledge?
  Where the hoped Millennium?

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V.

Where would be triumphant Science,
Searching with her fearless eyes,
Through the infinite Creation
For the soul that underlies—
Soul of Beauty, soul of Goodness,
Wisdom of the earth and skies?

VI.

Where would be all great inventions,
Each from by-gone fancies born,
Issued first in doubt and darkness,
Launch'd 'mid apathy and scorn?
How could noontime ever light us,
But for dawning of the morn?

VII.

Where would be our free opinion,
Where the right to speak at all,

If our sires, like thee mistrustful,
  Had been deaf to duty's call,
And concealed the thoughts within them,
  Lying down for fear to fall?

VIII.

Though an honest thought, outspoken,
  Lead thee into chains or death—
What is Life, compared with Virtue?
  Shalt thou not survive thy breath?
Hark! the future age invites thee!
  Listen! trembler, what it saith!

IX.

It demands thy thought in justice,
  Debt, not tribute, of the free;
Have not ages long departed
  Groan'd, and toil'd, and bled for thee?
If the Past have lent thee wisdom,
  Pay it to Futurity.

XXVI.

ON A PORTRAIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

I.

And is this she—so pure and meek—
  Is this the mighty Queen—
With soft full eyes and placid cheek,
  And aspect so serene?
Is this the Sovereign of the sea—
The Great, the Invincible, the Free?

II.

Are these the fragile hands that wield
  The firmest sceptre known?
Is this the fairy form revealed
  That fills earth's loftiest throne?

And with the shadow of her robe
Belts all the climates of the globe?

III.

No charm that in the poorest homes
  Breathes happiness around,
Is absent here; where'er she roams
  She carries holy ground:
And were she humble as she's high,
Love were alike her destiny.

IV.

Oh, subtle power of gentleness!
  Oh, strength of feeble hand!
Oh, bright example sent to bless
  And elevate our land!
Thou need'st no armies in defence—
Thou hast them in thine innocence!

V.

Great Queen! sweet Lady! Woman true!
  Fair Mother! tender Wife!
May blessings like the heavenly dew
  Fall daily on thy life!
For thee the nation's prayers ascend,
Its child, its guardian, and its friend.

VI.

Our prayers are grateful; for we know,
  Hadst thou, our peaceful star,
Not dawned amid impending woe,
  And clouds of coming war,
That civil discords might have broke
In lightnings round our British oak.

VII.

While "nations not so blest as we,"
  Toss'd in a whirl of grief,

Fought for some spectral liberty,
  Or sanguinary chief,
We prized the gift our sires bequeathed,
And round thy brow our laurels wreathed.

VIII.

While Anarchy prepared for fight,
  And Tyranny grew strong,
We stood a model for the right—
  A warning for the wrong:
And showed the realms, misdoubting still,
The quiet grandeur of our will.

IX.

We taught that theories were vain,
  However high and pure,
That took no heed of toil and pain,
  And patience to endure,
Or thought great Freedom's tree of power,
Grew like a mushroom in an hour.

X.

And if we've known a happier fate,
  Although some praise be theirs—
The pious people, brave and great,
  Made wise by many cares;
Not less the meed that's justly thine,
Supported by the Hand Divine.

XI.

Beneath thy mild, auspicious sway,
  The household virtues bloom,
And Learning and the Arts display
  A light through Europe's gloom.
And wondrous deeds are daily wrought,
That once seemed folly to have thought.

XII.

Th' electric chain, whose mystic girth,
  Makes distance but a span;

And Science covering all the earth
  With benefits for man;
And countless triumphs to be born
In the new dawning of the Morn:

XIII.

All these the annalist shall tell
  As glories of thy Crown,
And own as we, thy name a spell,
  And omen of renown;
Victoria of the peaceful smiles!
Queen and Enchantress of the Isles!

XXVII.

A BARD'S REQUEST.

I.

When I lie cold in death,
  Bury me where ye will,
Though if my living breath
  May urge my wishes still,
When I shall breathe no more;
  Let my last dwelling be
Beneath a turf with wild flowers covered o'er,
  Under a shady tree,—
A grave where winds may blow and sunshine fall,
And autumn leaves may drop in yearly funeral.

II.

I care not for a tomb,
  With sculptured cherubim,

Amid the solemn gloom
Of old cathedrals dim;
I care not for the pride
Of epitaphs well-meant,
Nor wish my name with any pomps allied,
When my last breath is spent;
Give me a grave beneath the fair green trees,
And an abiding-place in good men's memories.

III.

But wheresoe'er I sleep,
I charge you friends of mine,
With adjuration deep
And by your hopes divine,
Let no irreverent pen
For sake of paltry pay,
Expose my faults or follies unto men,
To desecrate my clay;
Let none but good men's tongues my story tell;—
Nor even they,—I'd sleep unvexed by any knell.

IV.

Why should the gaping crowd
Claim any right to know
How sped in shine or cloud
My pilgrimage below?
Why should the vulgar gaze
Be fixed upon my heart,
When I am dead, because in living days
I did my little part
To sing a music to the march of man—
A lark high carolling to armies in the van?

V.

But still if crowds will claim
A moral, to be told,
From my unwilling name,
When slumbering in the mould,
I'll tell the tale myself—
A story ever new—

Yet old as Adam—oh, ye men of pelf,
Ye would not tell it true!
But I will tell it in my noon of life,
And wave the flag aloft ere I depart the strife.

VI.

I wasted precious youth,
But learned before my prime,
The majesty of Truth,
The priceless worth of Time.
I hoped, and was deceived—
I built without a base—
I err'd—I suffer'd—doubted—and believed—
I ran a breathless race,
And when half-way toward the wished-for goal,
Despised the bauble crown, for which I'd given
my soul.

VII.

I thought that I was wise,
When folly was my rule,

But with late-open'd eyes
  Confess'd myself a fool.
I strove in vain to flee
  The penalty of sin;
I plucked the apple, Pleasure, from the tree,
  And found it dust within.

I sow'd ill seed in spring-time of my years—
And reaped the natural crop of agony and tears.

VIII.

I never did a wrong
  That brought not punishment,
In sufferings keen and long
  By chastening mercy sent.
I never did the right
  Without a sweet reward
Of inward music and celestial light,
  In beautiful accord.
I never scorn'd but with result of scorn,
Nor loved without new life when I was mo
  forlorn.

IX.

I think I loved my kind,
And strove to serve it too,
And in my secret mind
Adored the good and true.
I know I never dipped
My pen in slime or gall,
Or wrote a sentence which the purest lipp'd
Would scruple to recall;
I think my lyre gave forth a manly tone—
I know I never preached opinions not my own.

X.

I found, as man or boy,
Delight in wild woods green,
And reap'd perpetual joy
From every natural scene.
I nursed amid the crowd
My human sympathies;

To heart and brain they made appeal aloud,
With voice of mysteries.
And in the forest paths, or cities throng'd,
Nature was in my soul, and to my soul belonged.

XI.

In all my life I felt
God's presence evermore,
And reverently knelt
To love and to adore.
Such let the record be—
I charge ye, friends of mine,
Add but a date to this life-history—
The obituary line,—
Say that I lived and died, and did my best—
But spare my secret heart, and let my follies rest!

XXVIII.

RETURNING MESSENGERS.

I.

I WAS harsh and unforgiving,
  Cruel taunts escaped my tongue;
Every word, not dead, but living,
  Pierced the bosom whence it sprung—
  Poison'd arrow, backwards flung.

II.

From my lips the words of blessing
  Issued, though I know not when
Each my happy soul possessing
  Came, an angel, back again,
  Bearing blessings ten times ten.

XXIX.

THE TAMBOURINE GIRL OF PROCIDA.

I.

I LOVE my little native isle,
  Mine emerald in a golden deep;
My garden where the roses smile,
  My vineyard where the tendrils creep.
How sweetly glide the summer hours,
  When twilight shows her silver sheen;
And youths and maids from all the bowers
  Come forth to play the Tambourine.

II.

At morn the fisher spreads his sail
  Upon our calm encircling sea;
The farmer labours in the vale,
  Or tends his vine and orange tree.

ut soon as lingering sunset throws
O'er woods and fields a deeper green,
nd all the west in crimson glows,
They gather to the Tambourine.

III.

Ve love our merry native song,
Our moss-grown seats in lonely nooks,
ur moonlight walks the beach along,
For interchange of words and looks.
Vhen toil is done, and day is spent,
Sweet is the dance with song between;
he jest for harmless pleasure meant,
And tinkle of the Tambourine.

IV.

Iy native isle, my land of peace;
My father's home, my mother's grave;
Iay evermore thy joys increase,
And plenty o'er thy cornfields wave!

May storms ne'er vex thine ocean surf,
Nor war pollute thy valleys green;
Nor fail the dance upon thy turf,
Nor music of the Tambourine!

XXX.

THE STAGE COACH AND THE STEAM CARRIAGE.

O LUXURY of travel! joy refined!
  To fly steam-harness'd, in the ponderous train,
And feel the victory of mighty Mind
  O'er space and time, for uses not in vain!
  Yet ever in this world must loss and gain
Balance each other. Is it speed we prize?
  'Tis edged with danger, equipoised by pain,
And aids our business but to cheat our eyes.
Th' unsocial Rail affords no varied pleasure
  Like yours, ye coaches of a former day:
Apt for our haste, delightful for our leisure;—
  We miss the cantering team, the winding way,
The road-side halt, the post horn's well-known air,
The inns, the gaping towns, and all the landscape fair.

XXXI.

LIVING GREATNESS.

LEND me thine eyes, Posterity! A cloud
Gathers between my vision and the men
Whose voices echo o'er this breathing world.
Lend me thy sight:—lend me thy placid soul,
Free of this mean contemporaneous scorn,
That I may know what mighty spirits walk
Daily and hourly in my company,
Or jostle shoulders in the common crowd,
The thinkers and the workers of the Time.

I'm sick of Apathy, Contempt, and Hate,
And all the blinding dust which envy stirs,
To shroud the living lustre from our sight.
Lend me thine eyes, grateful Posterity!
Upon the hill-tops I would stand alone,
Companion of the vastness, and keep watch

Upon the giants passing to and fro,
Small to the dwellers in the vales beneath,
But great to me. Oh, just Posterity,
I strive to penetrate thy thought; to soar
Beyond the narrow precincts of To-day,
And judge what men now wanting crusts of bread
Shall in thy book stand foremost, honour crown'd;
What scorn'd and persecuted wretchedness
Shall shine, the jewel on a nation's brow;
And what unfriended genius, jeer'd, impugn'd,
Shall fill the largest niche of Pantheons.

I would behold, daily, for my delight,
The clear side of the greatness, the full size,
Shape, glory, majesty, of living men.
Why should our envy dim the orbs of heaven?
Why should our malice dwarf the giant's height?
Our scorn make black the white robes of the sage?
Lend me thy sight—I will see marvels yet,
Gold in the dust and jewels in the mire!

XXXII.

INKERMANN.

I.

Sebastopol lay shrouded
In thick November gloom,
And through the midnight silence
The guns had ceased to boom.
The sentinel outworn
In watching for the morn,
From Balaclava's heights
Beheld the Russian lights,
In the close-beleaguered fortress far adown;
And heard a sound of bells,
Wafted upwards through the dells,
And a roar of mingling voices and of anthems from town.

II.

They prayed the God of Justice
  To aid them in the wrong,
They consecrated Murder
  With jubilee and song.
To the slain, the joys of Heaven,—
To the living, sin forgiven,—
Were the promises divine
That were passed along the line,
gathered in their myriads ere the dawn;
While their priests in full accord,
Chanted glory to the Lord,
sed the Russian banner and the sword for
ıttle drawn.

III.

Stealthily and darkly,
  Amid the rain and sleet;
No trumpet-call resounding,
  Nor drum's tempestuous beat—

But shadow-like, and slow,
Came the legions of the foe,
Moving dimly up the steep
Where the British Camp asleep,
Lay unconscious of the danger lurking near;
And the soldier, breathing hard,
On the cold and sodden sward,
Dreamed of victory and glory, or of home and England dear.

IV.

Hark! Hear ye not a rumbling
On the misty morning air—
Like the rush of rising tempests
When they shake the forest bare?
The outposts on the hill
Hear it close, and closer still.
'Tis the tramp of iron heels,
'Tis the crash of cannon wheels,

And "to arms!" "to arms!" "to arms!" is the cry.
"'Tis the Russians on our flank!
Up, and arm each British rank!
And meet them, gallant Guardsmen, to conquer or to
die."

V.

Then rose the loud alarum
With a hurricane of sound,
And from short uneasy slumber
Sprang each hero from the ground;
Sprang each horseman to his steed,
Ready saddled for his need;
Sprang each soldier to his place,
With a stern, determined face;
While the rousing drum and bugle echoed far,
And the crack of rifles rung,
And the cannon found a tongue,
And down upon them bursting came the avalanche of
war.

VI.

Through the cold and foggy darkness
Sped the rocket's fiery breath,
And the light of rapid volleys,
In a haze of Living Death;
But each English heart that day
Throbbed impetuous for the fray,
And our hosts undaunted stood—
Beating back the raging flood,
That came pouring from the valley like a sea,
Casting havoc on the shore,
With a dull and sullen roar,—
The thunder-cloud above it, and the lightning flashing free.

VII.

On darkness grew the daylight,
'Mid the loud, incessant peal;
On the daylight followed noontide,—
And they struggled steel to steel!

O ye gallant souls and true!
O ye great immortal few!
On your banner, bright unfurl'd,
Shone the freedom of the world;
ur keeping lay the safety of the lands;
Lay the splendour of our name;
Lay our glory and our fame;
ye held and raised them all in your dauntless
hearts and hands.

VIII.

For a moment, and one only,
Seemed the Russians to prevail:
O ye brave eight thousand heroes!
Ye shall conquer! They shall fail!
They can face you—if they must—
But they fly your bayonet thrust.
And hark! the ringing cheer
That proclaims the French are near,

And is heard above the raging battle din!

Giving courage to the brave—

Striking terror to the slave,—

A signal and an omen of the victory to win!

IX.

Break forth thou storm of battle,

With a new and wild uproar!

Beam out thou flag of England,

With thy sister tricolor!

For, fighting side by side,

One in spirit, heart allied—

In the cause of truth combined,

For the freedom of mankind—

France and England show the world what may be done;

And their star of glory burns

And the tide of battle turns,

And the beaten Russians fly, and the victory is won.

X.

Thus fourteen thousand freemen,
  Invincible in right,
Defeated seventy thousand,
  In fierce unequal fight!
Thus Thermopylæ of old
And its men of Titan mould
Were surpassed, at duty's call,
By the Briton and the Gaul;
(May the splendour of their friendship never wane!)
By the men who fighting fell
With Cathcart and Lourmel,
Or lived with placid Raglan, avengers of the slain.

XI.

And as long as France and England
  Shall give birth to manlike men,
Their deeds shall be remembered
  Should the battle burst again;

And to actions as sublime
Shall inspire each future time.
And when War's alarms shall cease,
And the nations live in peace,
Safe from Tyranny, its murder, and its ban,—
Let us tell with generous pride
How our heroes fought and died
And saved a threatened world on the heights of
Inkermann!

THE END.

SUMMER SHADES

EGERIA,

OR

THE SPIRIT OF NATURE;

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY,

AUTHOR OF "VOICES FROM THE CROWD," "TOWN LYRICS," "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES," &c.

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TO

GEORGE COMBE,

AUTHOR OF THE "CONSTITUTION OF MAN,"

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE VERY CORDIALLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

[redacted]

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INTRODUCTION.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE ALLEGED ANTI-POETICAL TENDENCIES OF THE PRESENT AGE.

THOUGH it may look like a truism to assert that poetry has been the preacher of virtue, the inciter of heroism, and the refiner of society; yet the fact needs repeating, in consequence of the misconception that seems to have arisen on the true nature of poetry, and the duty of the poet. Modern civilization is said to be weary of poetry; or, if not wearied with the poets of past ages, to be quite contented with them, and to wish for no more. The very name of poet has latterly been received with a sneer. The poet has been thought a trifler; the obstinate devotee of a defunct art, which, in its most vigorous time, was only fitted for the amusement of the idle and the frivolous. This misconception has arisen from various causes; partly from the ignorance or indifference of critics and philosophers; partly from the more unpardonable indifference of some, not unworthy of the name of poets, who have depreciated their own calling; and, in a still greater degree, from the incompetence of the vast multitude of persons who have been styled poets without the slightest right to the title—mere verse-makers, who have thrown discredit upon the name, not knowing that the hold of poetry upon the fancy and the imagination is secondary to its sway over the heart and the intellect, and that the *true* poet can preach and prophecy as well as sing.

Lord Bacon did some harm in this respect. Being more conversant with the pretensions of the rhymers of his day than with the performances of the poets, he misstated the whole object of poetry. In his famous *Essay on Truth*, he asserted that the proper element of poetry was *fiction*, as distinguished from, and the oppo-

site of, *truth*. "One of the later schools of the Grecians," said he, "is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, *as with poets*, nor for advantage, as with the *merchant;* but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell: this same truth is a naked and open daylight that doth not show the masques, and mummeries, and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candlelight. Truth may, perhaps, come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day, but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or a carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A MIXTURE OF A LIE DOTH EVER ADD A PLEASURE. One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy, 'the wine of demons,' because it filleth the imagination, and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie." So said the great philosopher; and so too many have believed, because they were told to believe by one who spoke with authority. Lord Bacon did not reflect on the abuse of this word, LIE. He, of all men, ought not to have forgotten what he so well knew, that a *fiction* is not necessarily a LIE. He should have remembered that fables are truths to the wise. Plato, though he would have banished poets from his ideal republic, meaning thereby the writers of licentious and mischievous plays, and not the real poets, had more correct notions of the sublimity and divinity of poetry. He said that "*poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history.*" And this, indeed, is the secret source of the power and grandeur of poetry. The highest poetry approaches nearest to vital truth; and poetry is only good and beautiful, and worthy to be loved and admired, in proportion as it identifies itself with the truth. No truth can be alien or inappropriate to it. It embraces all things, and has no other bounds than the aspirations of the soul of man, its knowledge and enjoyment of the actual, and its hopes of the possible. While the world has thus been led astray by inconsiderate criticism, and while rhymers have written and published piles of wearisome books, founded upon this misconception, it is no wonder that poetry has fallen into some disfavour with men who have something else to think of and to do than to read mere fictions, without any soul of truth; inane repetitions, teaching nothing, containing nothing, and as worthless as Lord Bacon imagined all

poetry to be. While such ideas have been considered criticism, the province of poetry has been restricted as a necessary consequence. The poet, too commonly by his own consent, has been tethered with a critical string. Criticism has said to him, "You shall not touch upon religion; that is not within your province. You shall not meddle with politics; they are alien to you. You shall not travel into the regions of science; for science and poetry are antagonistic. You may listen to the birds singing, the streams flowing, or the sea roaring; you may make love verses, or write pastorals; you may be passionate or musical, or merry, or melancholy, if you will. All you have to do is to amuse us, and leave serious subjects alone." Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Akenside*, informs us, that "with the *philosophical* or *religious* tenets of the author *he had nothing to do;* his *business was with his poetry*." And this he said, although his poetry could not be properly considered without the politics and religion which gave it a colour. Again, in his *Life of Dr. Watts*, he hinted, what is known to have been his belief, that good poetry could not be written upon a religious topic. "It is sufficient for Watts," said he, "to have done better than others, what no man has done well." To introduce politics into poetry is thought to be wrong by many critics, who would think you injured them if you questioned their acuteness. "The union of politics with poetry," say they, "is always hurtful to the politics, and fatal to the poetry." In fact, they consider it unpardonable to wed them together; or even to let the smallest love passage take place betwixt them; "as if," say the objectors, "we have not politics enough in the newspapers, in public places, at the very corners of the streets." And they say right, if their idea of poetry be right; but not right for those who have notions more exalted, and sympathies more extended. These objectors confound politics with party, which is a mistake; and they think poetry destined for mere amusement, which is another. They do not think that there are politics far better than any parties that ever were formed; and that the amusement found in poetry is a mere accident—an extrinsic adornment only—and that its object is to teach, exalt, and refine; to inspire, like religion, the humble with dignity, the sad with comfort, the oppressed with hope; to

show the abundant and overflowing blessings of familiar things—the riches, the beauty, and the beneficence of nature; to fill all men with the love of God and of one another; and to encourage society in its onward career from bad into good, and from good into better, through all Time into Eternity. The lovers of mere amusement have not reached this pinnacle, and do not see so goodly a prospect around them. But they ought to educate their faculties, until their minds *can* soar to these high regions, before they pronounce what poetry ought not to be, and define the limits which it should not overstep.

Yet, after all, it is not so surprising that critics should go wrong, when those who should be superior to the critics—the poets themselves—have set the bad example. When Charles II. objected to Edmund Waller, that his verses upon Cromwell were better than those he had written about his lawful sovereign, Waller replied, "*Your Majesty knows that we poets succeed better in fiction than in truth.*" In this pretty speech, he behaved like a courtier and a man of the world, but not like a poet, and committed treason to the majesty of his art. We find a modern poet, too, seriously accommodating himself to the same error—Mr. Monckton Milnes, in his volume entitled *Palm Leaves*, devotes a poem to the praise of Mahomet, as a prophet and a legislator. He speaks of him as—

> "No poet he, weaving capricious dreams
> To please inconstant youth;
> But one who uttered without shows and seems
> The serious facts of Truth."

This, it must be admitted, is strange language to come from one claiming to have "the vision and the faculty divine." As if a poet could not utter "serious facts" without "shows" and "seems," and as if a poet were, of necessity, a vain dreamer, and an idler of no use or advantage to society!

Mr. Wordsworth, whose writings testify loudly to the utter untenableness of this theory, has also uttered a sentence which some have interpreted to the depreciation of his divine art. He says, in an essay supplementary to one of his early prefaces,

"that the appropriate business of poetry, her appropriate employment, her privilege, her duty, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they appear; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the senses and the passions." It is, however, no depreciation of poetry to assert that its province is not to treat of things as they are. His meaning is, not *merely* as they are; but to add to them a grace and a beauty over and above their positive existence. He will not diminish the existence of a thing, but he will *increase* its existence by the aid of the beauty perceived by the senses and given by the passions. He never considers that the province of poetry is the unreal against the real, the fictitious uninclusive of the true; and against such a theory his poems are immortal evidence, as Milton's are, and Shakspeare's, and those of all great poets.

Very many of those who restrict the domain of poetry are fain to admit, upon discussion, that religion and politics, in their highest sense, are legitimate sources of inspiration; but they stipulate for pure religion, not sectarianism, and for catholic and national politics, not for party warfare. This being conceded—and that poetry should enter within these precincts solely in search of, and for the promulgation of, truth—they would, nevertheless, shut the door of science against it. Within this they will on no account suffer it to enter. "The scholar," says Madame de Staël, as quoted by D'Israeli the elder, in the fourteenth chapter of his *Essay on the Literary Character*, "has nothing to say to the poet, the poet to the naturalist." The author of *Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England*, published in *Knight's Weekly Volumes*, falls in a degree into this error. He says, in his notice of Darwin, that his scientific descriptions, in the *Botanic Garden* and the *Loves of the Plants*, "display more ingenuity than poetry"—a judgment in which most men will agree. He goes on to say—"Poetry and Science are two rival and hostile powers. Whenever anything has been reduced to matter of science, its poetical character is extinguished; it ceases to appeal to any passion or affection. What was veneration or terror, religion or superstition, becomes satisfied and unimpassioned intelligence. Imagination is dethroned there; its creative power abolished and destroyed,

its transforming illumination made impossible. Even mere wonder, the lowest of all the imaginative states of mind, ceases, when the scientific comprehension is complete; for, of course, when understood, no one thing is really more wonderful than another. * * * The tendency of science is to reduce and level; the tendency of poetry is to magnify and exalt. Each, therefore, has its proper and peculiar ground. They cannot act in concert. In other words, it is impossible to treat any subject at once scientifically and poetically." The author of the *Pleasures of Hope* expressed a similar sentiment in his celebrated *Ode to the Rainbow*—

> "When Science from Creation's face
> Enchantment's veil withdraws,
> What lovely visions yield their place
> To cold material laws."

Both of these writers seem to be wrong in this particular, the first more especially so. No doubt the prose writer is quite correct in his condemnation of the technicalities and scientific minutiæ of Darwin, and their incapability of poetical treatment; but he carries his principle too far, and falls into a great mistake. Any one must have studied "the great truths of science" to little purpose, who can talk of the "satisfied and unimpassioned intelligence" with which he comprehends them. Those truths, even the very least of them, are of sublimest import; and it is not after such a manner that those who have most studied, and who know most of the ever wondrous, ever new revelations of science, would think it fitting for the humble spirit—humble in the littleness of the highest knowledge—to speak either of the known or the unknown agencies of the Indefinitude. Poetry may and must treat of the truths of science, wherever it suits its purpose to do so, or it abdicates a portion of its prerogative. This it can do without allusion to technicalities and trivialities, such as those which so offend us in the writings of Darwin. As for the solitary stanza of Campbell, no true poet will take it for his guide. No man knew better than Campbell that science was the nursing mother of poetry, who showed it whither to fly, and to what glorious regions to turn in search of new inspiration. In spite of his authority in this stanza,

great as many will consider it, we, in our day, must acknowledge that the withdrawal by science of the veil from creation's face, though it may deprive fancy of some filagree adornments, robs imagination of nothing. The rainbow has venerable associations, when we think upon it as the sign of the covenant:

> "We think its jubilee to keep,
> The first made anthems rang.
> On earth delivered from the deep,
> And the first poet sang."

But science, which shows us the secret wonders of its mechanism, adds a new delight to its contemplation, without depriving it of this. We see it spanning heaven like an arch; we see it, if we stand upon the mountain-tops, developed into the complete circle; we see its counterpart in the spray of the torrent on a sunny day; and can produce Irises as often as we will, in the glancing drops cast upwards in the sunshine from the paddle-wheels of steam-boats—the same in their magnificent hues, so exquisitely overlaid, and gliding the one into the other with the same loveliness. We acknowledge the simplicity, the grandeur, the majesty, of "the material law" which is obeyed in their formation. We find that law to be, not cold, as Campbell sings, but warm and fruitful, producing invariable and inevitable results from the same causes. We see that both the cause and the effect are proofs of infinite wisdom and divine goodness filling all nature with things of beauty, of which the contemplation increases our enjoyments and exalts our souls, and makes us fitter to be true men in this world, and to mount in the scale of creation in the next to a state of a higher intelligence, purer love, and more certain happiness. The comet careering through the heavens does not cease to impress the mind with its grandeur and its mystery, because it is no longer thought to scatter war and pestilence from its "horrid hair." On the contrary, it inspires emotions still more sublime of the might and majesty of God, when we consider that His hand who made it, made also that awful intellect of man, which traces its course through the infinitude of space, and calculates its coming from afar. The sun is not less poetical as the centre of a vast system, than as a mere adjunct to the earth, set in the heavens to give her light,

physical or mental slavery—and that in the bosom of civilization herself the multitudes have not participated in her benefits, but have been the prey of poverty, disease, and crime. Reason and faith, and all experience, as far as it has gone, combine to show that this state of things is not a necessary consequence of man's nature. By looking about us, we see that many evils have been remedied; that a great many more are falling beneath the advances of intelligence, and the sublime doctrine of Christianity, that we ought to love one another; and we are encouraged by that which has been already done to hope for much more. Science, by increasing the physical comforts of mankind, is preparing the way for mental blessings and mental progress, to an extent which to some minds seems Utopian to imagine, but which will be realised nevertheless. All our physical conquests over matter are proofs and results of mental energies, working to various ends, and all of them we cannot doubt, though we may not yet understand, to ultimate spiritual, as well as physical, good. The utilitarian, who confines utility to merely physical advantage, may deny in a great degree the usefulness of literature, and wholly deny the usefulness of poetry. Believing it to be founded on fiction; to be, as the ancient father has it, "the vain shadow of a lie," he may say that he will have none of it; and turn his mind to the contemplation of his money-bags. But there are better and truer utilitarians than the men of this class; who can see a good, and consequently a beauty, in every manifestation of the human intellect. To utilitarians who believe this, poetry has as great a claim to respect as science or religion—provided always it be TRUE poetry. It follows from the utilitarianism of the age—if this be a correct definition of it—that it is an earnest age; for if facts be stubborn things, utility is an earnest and a thoughtful thing, and the man who would exert any influence over such an age, must himself be thoroughly and hopefully in earnest. Hitherto, in England, the great fault of men of letters, as a class, has been a deficiency of earnestness. They have not loved their vocation. Notwithstanding all their vanity and pride, they have been ashamed of it. Their lot has been cast in a country where there was a tendency to wealth-worship, and a rush into all professions or pursuits promising to success the rewards of wealth

or rank. The man of letters has had no chance of either from *his* profession; he has not been recognized at all; and but too often thrown into it from a failure in other pursuits of life—like a friendless woman, who, losing her husband, sets up a day-school as a last resource in her extremity. Too often, therefore, they have cringed to the powerful, or pandered to the passions and prejudices of the crowd. Writers of this class have done nothing for literature but degrade it. They have impaired the respect of serious men for all literature that is not stamped with the seal of antiquity, or the approval of one generation of thinkers at least, and rendered more difficult the task of him who loves it and cultivates it for its own sake, independently of worldly recompense. Happily this earnestness of feeling, without which no good can be done, is increasing; and the day seems to be approaching when an author will no more be ashamed of his profession than a lawyer or a divine, a painter or a physician, a merchant or a manufacturer. The new generation read books. A bold and craving spirit is abroad. Our living authors should remember that the great minds of the past preach to us evermore. By a divine privilege, we are enabled to converse with the mighty men who went before us. Their words and thoughts are perpetuated for our consolation, our instruction, and our guidance. We weep for the sorrows, rejoice for the gladness, tremble with the fears, and glow with the hopes, of departed centuries. And if our living writers will not fulfil their high functions in as good a spirit as these, they are unworthy of the high place that would otherwise have been set apart for them. They distract the attention of the age with their vain babble, and bring contempt upon a vocation which should be considered holy. We have books enough, and more than enough. Hence the arduous task reserved for all writers, and more especially for poets, in the present day—for men who would reflect the age, and yet be in advance of it—who would be of sympathies with it and yet beyond it—who would give it the blossoms of their intellect with a full certainty that those blossoms, fair and flowery to this age, would be fruit to the ages which are to follow it.

To think that because we are a practical people, living in a practical age, that we shall no more find pleasure in the varied

beauty of nature, animate and inanimate; that the beams of the sun, or the mental sunshine of bright faces, shall fill us no more with delight; that love, or hopes, or joys, or sorrows, shall no more affect us; or that poetry, which refines and spiritualizes all these, shall be extinguished by the progress of civilization, is mere lunacy. As civilization increases, the world will, doubtless, become more difficult to please in poetry. The wiser men grow, the less aptitude will they exhibit for being put off with shadows instead of realities. But poetry itself, purified and exalted, will all the more purify and exalt mankind. Those who speak great truths from their fulness of heart, and enshrine them in noble words set to the music which stirs the blood, will never want listeners. The poets who would do that have an arduous but noble task. Such poets need not fear that they have fallen upon evil times for their vocation; if they be but in earnest with it, and will not make it their pastime, but the business and recompense of their lives. Let them put on their singing robes cheerily in the face of heaven and nature; and wear them in a trustful and patient spirit, and speak that which is in them for the advancement of their kind and the glory of their Creator, and there will be no risk that they will be allowed to sing in the wilderness, "no man listening to them."

POEMS.

EGERIA.

CANTO I.—THE SEASHORE.

Upon the lonely margin of the sea,
Whose crested waves beat hoarsely on the shore,
Warring against it with perpetual feud,
Sat Julian, young and fair, but full of woe.
His calm blue eyes were turned upon the deep,
Looking, not seeing: all his thought, self-poised,
Seemed centred in untold calamity.
Beside him stood another, more mature,
But youthful still, and in his early prime,
With sun-brown skin, full eyes, and ruddy cheeks,
An open front, and light thick-clustering hair.
"Julian," he said, "why dwells upon thy brow
This settled grief? Art thou not young? and rich?
And strong? and healthful?—with a host of friends?

Hast thou not everything the world can give?
All that the heart can crave, or sense desire?
Hast thou not intellect, and power, and fame,
And heavenly opportunity of growth?
And yet, from day to day, and night to night,
Thou sittest moping o'er ideal griefs;—
A moony idiot were not worse than thou."

"Ay, thou mayst talk and lecture, Montague!
I've run some round of pleasure in my time;
I've seen and heard, and studied and explored,
Examined, delved, weighed, suffered, thought, enjoyed.
Tried every pleasure, tasted every pain,
And, like King Solomon, with deep disgust,
I can but cry, 'Oh, empty Vanity!
Oh, sharp vexation! mockery! despair!'"

A loud, long laugh was Montague's response:
But still the other kept his moody mien,
And looked so woe-begone and sick of heart,
His friend took pity on his misery,
And spake him kindly:—"Julian, thou art ill.
It is not natural a man should brood
Ever on sorrow, where no sorrow dwells.
Perchance thy busy brain is overwrought
With mental toil:—come, give thy heart a turn—
Thy heart, thy limbs, thy morals, and thy life.
Leave books and study, systems, dogmas, creeds,
Divines, philosophers, historians, bards:—

Pamphlets, blue-books, and leading-articles.
Leave the economists, Oh, leave them all,
Until some surer science than they teach,
Of social justice, shall dispel their doubts,
And lead them to the light from utter dark.
And, worse than all, leave metaphysic lore,
Which sinks thee floundering in chaotic glooms,
Till thou art dubious of the Universe,
And of thy little self as part of it.
Leave them awhile, and let 's go hunt, or shoot,
Or swim, or climb the hills, or give a feast,
Or dance with Beauty in the glittering ball;—
Or travel into Iceland, or to Ind,
Or through the desert to the Pyramids,
Or over Andean heights; or, if thou wilt,
To San Francisco and the golden land."

"I like thee, Montague, but I am sad.
I 've lost my faith, my courage, and my hope,
And often doubt if Evil or if Good
Made and upholds this wretched Universe.
The earth is foul, the o'er-arching skies are black,
When I behold the misery and wrong,
The crimes and follies of humanity."

"Mere moony madness, Julian; throw it off,
Nor vilify the world, thyself, and God."

"Not so; for I have looked into my heart,
And in its mirror I have seen—*myself:*

Myself, not worst of all the crawling things
That desecrate the innocent lap of earth;
And what I saw I 've wept and shuddered at.
A blight is on me. I am young in years,
But old before my time with deep disgust
At mine ownself—at Man—at Heaven—at Fate."

"A pretty bridegroom, Julian, thou wouldst make
Brimful, of warring doubts and phantasies.
My sister shall not wed misanthropy;
I will persuade her to uproot her love,
And pluck it from the tendrils of her heart,
Unless her bridegroom shall grow sane again,
And love all humankind for sake of her.
Why, 't was but yestermorn thou swor'st an oath,
That Ellen's love was paradise to win,
And thou hadst won it. Julian, be a man,
And cease this whooping, hideous as an owl's:
Come, I will be thy doctor in this case,
And cure thee for the credit of my craft."

"Tell thy fair sister, Montague, her love
Exalts me to myself, and her to heaven.
Tell her I love her as beseems a man,
With heart and soul, and stedfast purity;
And that since time began, and earth was earth,
Was never woman more beloved than she:
Were she estranged, I should be mad indeed,
And life would lose its latest spark of light."

"If so, I 'll cure thee, or my leechcraft fails.
Come with me to the fields, and skip, run, leap—
The breath of heaven shall waft thee quietude,
The breeze of morn bear healing to thy brain,
The voice of Nature speak to thee of peace,
And with perpetual comfort, ever new,
Free thy sad spirit from the evil thoughts
That dim the lovely world, and poison air
With cancerous blotches. Julian, be advised,
And I will make thee whole. Hark! in the sky
The lark sings merrily, the river brawls,
Running its happy journey to the sea.
The doves are cooing on the forest boughs,
The sunlight streams upon the distant hills—
All Nature smiles in innocence and joy:
The very wind that sports amid the leaves
Whispers the loveliness of earth and life."

"Ay, of the earth," he said, "but not of man;
The vain, capricious, sanguinary fool,
Who makes his gods in likeness of himself,
And peoples heaven with base divinities—
Creatures of lust impure, and savage guile.—
Ah! were the world a world of little babes,
That never ripened into full-grown men,
I might confess the heavenliness of earth,
And see the vision of a paradise!
But time and change brew evil out of good,

And of the innocent suckling make a man.
And of the man a thing that cheats and lies,
And kills his fellows for religious hate.
Have *I* not, Montague—say, have not *I*
Essayed to teach this base and sordid age
The heavenly truths it knows not? Have not *I*
Endeavoured to instill the sense of Right,
Of Mercy, Justice, Charity, and Truth,
To this swine multitude, mire-wallowing,
And garbage-gorged? And what is my reward?
The hate of men I would have died to serve,
The persecution of the lying scribes,
The gibes and insults of the ignorant mob,
The scorn of fools, who love their beaten ways,
Ev'n though they lead through mire and slags and thorns,
To wilderness and precipice and swamp,
Better than newer pathways edged with flowers.
I tell them peace is holier than war,
And they would slay me for the heresy;
I tell them love is more divine than hate,
And they detest me, and assault with lies;
I tell them God is love, and they invoke
Ten thousand angry and insatiate fiends
To launch their thunderbolts, and strike me dumb."

"Thou wouldst reform the world—reform thyself!
Thou art too zealous. Why should men efface
Their old traditions, prejudices, laws,

Ideas, manners, creeds, and forms of faith,
Merely that thou shouldst build them up afresh
On a new model, such as earth ne'er saw?
Men love the old—they cling to what they learn'd
From sires and grandsires, and from grandams too.
Thou canst not make blank pages of their hearts,
For new philosophers to scribble on.
The old, old writing, stereotyped, remains;
A venerable lie outweighs a truth
That only saw the daylight yesterday.
An ancient error is a thing for love,
Not to be outraged with impunity.
What if men foolishly invoke on thee
The fatal thunderbolts? Will they descend
Because they crave them? Live unto thyself,
To Nature, and to God, and let the world,
Vicious or virtuous, roll as it is wont.
Hast thou a mission from Eternal Fate,
Which made mankind for good and not for ill,
To make them, or remake them, to thy bent?
If evil things take root, and fructify
In the fat soil and substance of the heart,
Shalt thou be stronger than Omnipotence
To weed them out? Art thou more wise than God,
Who, for His own wise purposes, permits
Or makes the evil which thy soul deplores?
Shall man transform the imperfect earth to heaven,

Or strive t' anticipate the eternal day,
Not of his fixing, but of God's alone,
When he shall grow to the angelic height,
And wear the white robes of the seraphim?

"But let us talk no more of things like these,
I am aweary of misanthropy.
I hate its look—its words—its whereabout;
I 'd rather be a savage in the woods,
And love my wife, my child, my friend, my dog,
Than be a moon-struck mad philosopher,
Sick of the world, disgusted with myself,
Having no faith in man, in truth, or God.
Time was when thou couldst laugh, and jest, and sing,
Hear music, drink delight, make Turkish heaven,
Draw inspiration from bright hazel orbs,
Dote upon eyes of blue, and swear by black—
When thou couldst toy with flowing auburn locks,
And beg a tress or curl of raven hair
To make a brooch, a locket, or a ring—
When for a smile thou 'dst walk a hundred leagues,
And for a kiss go mad as Anthony.
Do so again—do anything but this.
I could endure the worst extravagance,
All sensual outbreak—all insane delight,
Sooner than hatred. Oh! I 'm sick of Hate,
And cordially detest Misanthropy."

"Bear with me, Montague, I am not sane,

And yet, dear friend, I think I am not mad.
There 's something wrong: some small invisible hinge
In mind or brain will neither ope nor shut;
My nerves are instruments of torturing pain;
I am a harp so utterly out of tune,
That not Cecilia's self could draw a note
Of heavenly melody from such a string."

"Repose!—and Nature's vivifying touch
Shall bring thee healing. Thou art overwrought;
Give thyself holiday, and plod no more;
Take thy enjoyment on the quiet hills;
Bathe in the ocean surf upon the beach,
Or hear sweet music in the birken bowers;
Roam in the field, the forest, or the mount,
And whisper to the spirit of the wilds—
The soul of Nature, nymph Egeria.
She is not dead: her oracles respond."—

"Egeria! vision of the men of old!
Oh, that the dream might be reality!
That I could summon her ideal form,
And track the spirit to her secret haunts,
Communing with her upon earth and heaven,
Another Numa; draining from her lips
Sweet reconcilement with the world and man!"

"What if I summoned her? and if my power
Could, from the vague idea of thy brain,
Shape her before thee, radiant, fair, and young?

Mine eyes behold her. Often, all alone,
I've wandered with her through the trackless woods,
I've sat beside her by the fountain's brim,
I've laid my head upon her tender breast,
I've seen her thin robes floating on the wind,
I've seen her shooting o'er the arch of heaven
Bright as a meteor: on the thunder-cloud
I've seen her riding: on the lightning flash
I've seen her fly. In calm and storm alike,
I've seen her skim the foam-bursts of the sea,
Or glide to lily-bells and drop asleep,
Or trail her garments in the morning dew."

"Dreamer of dreams! would I could dream like thou!"—

"Dreams grow realities to earnest men.
It may be true, as old logicians taught,
That Earth and all its shows and vanities,
Thyself, myself, and all that we behold,
Are dreams, projected on a bodiless mind.
But no!—the world is hard and stubborn fact,
A world of laws, of pains, and penalties,
And dreams are spirits, wandering to and fro,
To be embodied for behoof of those
Who can make angels of them at their will.
And so this dream, Egeria, shall be
A visible presence, to attune thy soul
To purer harmony with God and man."

CANTO II.—THE FOUNTAIN.

Deep in the shade of high o'er-arching trees,
Birches and beeches, elms and knotted oaks,
A fountain murmured with a pleasant sound.
Not often through those thick umbrageous leaves
Pierced the full glory of the noon-day sun;
Not often through those pendulous branches hoar
Glittered the mellow radiance of the moon.
A cool dim twilight, with perpetual haze,
Crept through the intricate byways of the wood,
And hung like vapour on the ancient trees;
The place was musical with sweetest sounds,
The fountain sang a soft monotonous song;
The leaves and branches rustled to the wind
With whispered melody; the waving grass
Answered the whisper in a softer tone;
While morn and eve, the midnight and the noon,
Were listeners to the rapturous minstrelsy
Of lark and linnet, nightingale and thrush,
And all the feathered people of the boughs.

In this calm nook, secluded from the world,
The marble statue of a nymph antique
Stood in the shadow: radiant were her limbs
With modesty; her up-turned face was bright

With mental glory and serene repose;
The full round arms and figure to the midst,
Displayed the charm of chastest nudity;
A flowing drapery round her lower limbs,
In ample folds concealed the loveliness,
The majesty, and glory of the form.
One hand was raised and pointed to the stars,
The other, resting on her snow-white breast,
Seemed as it felt the pulsing of her heart;
She stood the symbol of enraptured thought
And holy musing. At her feet an urn
Poured in a marble fount a constant stream
Of limpid water; sacred seemed the place
To philosophic and religious calm;
The very wind that stirred the upper boughs
Seemed as attuned to choral harmonies.
Upon the pedestal these words inscribed,
In Grecian character revealed her name:
"*Egeria*—he who seeks her here, shall find;
"Love be his light, and purity his guide."

Thither at noon came Julian and his friend.
"Behold," said Montague, "the nymph divine;
The visible portraiture of her whose voice
Poured healing, in the simple days of old,
To Numa's soul, when he was sad as thou.
Hast any faith in the unseen but true?
And canst thou free thy spirit from the yoke

Of things material, gross, and palpable,
And soar with mine beyond the bounds of sense?"
"I have small faith," said Julian; "sense to me
Is the main anchor; immaterial things
Are less than shadows; yet perchance they *are*."—
"Believe!" said Montague, "and thou shalt learn!
My powerful will shall work a miracle.
With mystic wave and passes of my hand,
I'll pour upon thy spirit, and thy brain,
Another sense more vigorous than sight;
And thou shalt see, what thou hast never seen,
And thou shalt hear, what thou hast never heard;
And, in the kernel of the Universe,
Behold the hidden causes at their work."
A smile incredulous o'er Julian's face
Shot rapidly as light. "I'll try thy skill.
'T is possible that I may drop to sleep;—
Great is the magic of monotony!
If thou canst lull me in mesmeric trance,
And from thy fingers shed upon my brain
The sense additional of spiritual sight,
I'll own the truths I may have long denied,
And fix no limits to the possible.
Go on. I would behold Egeria."
Upon the rustic bench they sat them down,
And Julian was aware of strength infused
Into his eyes—into his brain, and heart.

Deep slumber clad him like a coat-of-mail,
From which, awaking into fuller life,
He felt that from his eyes a film had dropt.
An inward light pervaded all his frame;
A tremulous feeling of ecstatic joy
Possessed his spirit:—"This is happiness.
I float—I fly—the music of the stars
Rings in mine ears; mine eyes behold the light—
The hidden things are dark to me no more."

The statue bent her eyes upon his face,
And looked upon him with benignant smile,
And then, descending from the pedestal,
Stood at his side in maiden bashfulness.
"Julian," she said, "thou hast desired mine aid;
He who would woo me must be pure of heart,
And look on Nature with a loving mind.
The secrets of the Universe are closed
To hatred, scorn, impurity, and guile.
A little child can see them, while the man,
A prey to passion, blinded by his pride,
His groping knowledge, and his self-conceit,
Walks in the darkness, and but dreams he sees."

"Spirit of Nature, let me be a child!"

"Behold!" she said, and touched him on the eyes.
And he was conscious of a power divine,
Which gave him strength to feel and understand.
"Thou who art weary of the world and men,

And makest moan of misery and wrong;
Thou who complainest of the doom of toil,
The law of death, the penalty of pain,
Deeming them evil, heavy burdens borne
By man alone, the helot of the world—
Behold, and learn!" He looked, and at his feet,
Above him, and around, on every side,
He saw the tremor and the gush of life.
Leaf spoke to leaf upon the tree-tops high,
The knotted oak was comrade of the wind,
And waved in pleasure its extremest boughs:
It spread its roots in earth, its arms in heaven,
With sense of being. Daisies in the sward
Nodded their cups with joy; the hare-bells blue
Shook to the passing breezes with delight;
The very grass that nestled in the shade
Knew it existed, and enjoyed its life.
He looked again, and leaf, and blade, and flower,
Were populous with happy living things.
The hare-bell cup was spacious as a world;
The rough rind of the sheltering oak-tree branch
Supported in its tiny villages
Myriads of creatures, borne on pinions bright,
Resplendent with all colours interfused.
The cricket chirupped in his coat of mail;
The brisk cicada answered him aloud,
And rubbed the emerald armour of his thighs.

The glittering beetle trod the yielding grass,
Proud of his panoply. The buzzing gnat,
With jewelled brow and feathers in her hair,
Pealed her triumphal horn. The nimble midge
Danced as if dancing were supremest joy,
And shook her wings in gladness. Butterflies,
Conscious of beauty, sped from flower to flower,
And flaunted in the aspect of the day
Their robes of spangled tissue, fairer far
Than ever caliph for his blushing bride
Bought with the wealth of conquered provinces.
And countless hosts of scarcely visible things
Lived and were happy in each leaf and bud,
In every crinkle of the oaken bark,
In every dew-drop trembling on the flower.
To them a world. Most beautiful were all,
Whate'er their form, their structure, or their size:
And Julian blessed them for Egeria's sake.

"Behold, once more!" the radiant spirit said.
And lo! fierce war through all the woodland raged.
The emmets marched their armies to the strife,
And slew each other, as at Waterloo
Insensate men destroyed their fellow-men,
And all the ground was covered with the dead.
The hungry finch pursued the butterfly;
The hawk, down swooping from mid-air, perceived
The timid songster hidden in the boughs,

And dealt the blow of death; the spider spread
His intricate web, to snare the gnat and fly,
Proud of their finery; the beetle's jaws
Consumed whole nations for his noon-day meal;
The caterpillar crawled upon the leaf,
Among the calm, unconscious aphides,
Like Typhon 'mid the flocks of Sicily—
Gigantic horror prowled. "Complaining man,"
Whispered Egeria, "see the law of life.
The grass must wither, and the flower must fall.
The oak, whose rings mark centuries of growth,
Must perish in its season. All this life,
That sports and flutters in the breeze of heaven,
Like thee has sense of happiness and joy—
Like thee must pay the penalty of pain—
Like thee it toils to live—like thee supports
The burden of the elements, and yields
Obedience to the laws of time and space—
And is, like thee, inheritor of death."

"And all the stars?" said Julian. "In those orbs,
That shine upon the forehead of the night
With lustre so benign, is Death the lord?
Are toil and pain the lot of all who live
In heaven, as on the earth?" Egeria smiled.
"The great condition of all life is Death.
Would'st have the bane, and not the antidote?
How couldst thou know the heat, if not for cold?

How comprehend the light, if not for dark?
How north, if not for south? How could thy sense
Interpret upwards, were it not for down?
Wouldst banish Death? Go back six thousand years,
And make a world where Death should never come,
A world without an evil or a toil,
Without the polar principle of pain,
And tell me what a hell such world would be!
Behold th' eternal and untoiling stones;—
Pain cannot touch them: Death is impotent:
O'er them the summer's heat and winter's cold
Glide harmless ever. Happy are the stones!
Wouldst lower thy humanity to them,
And fill thine earth, and the remotest stars,
With senseless minerals? Oh! fair is Life—
Life, and her sister Death—twin-born, co-reared,
And co-existent to eternity."

"Oh, misery!—Oh, utter misery!"
Said Julian, shuddering through all his frame.
"Are great Orion and the Pleiades,
Arcturus, and the heavenly galaxy—
Is all this boundless universe of stars,
This dread Infinitude of worlds and suns,
One great pulsation of incessant pain?
Is Death indeed the universal lord?"

"And wherefore not?" the spirit made reply.
"Is Death not Life? Why wilt thou close thy sense?

Is not thy rest the offspring of thy toil?
Is not thy labour pole of thy repose?
And thine indulgence creature of thy need?"
"But pain," said Julian, "never-ending pain?"
"There is no pain but for the ignorant—
Pain is the friend and guardian of the wise,"
Whispered the spirit. "Wouldst thou place thy hand
In the consuming and destroying fire,
And ask it not to burn? Wouldst fall from heights
Upon the stony bosom of the earth,
And ask it not to bruize? Wouldst break the laws
That govern and uphold the universe—
The modulations of harmonious heaven—
And, without knowledge of thy sacrifice,
Destroy thy being? Wise, and good, and just
Are all the laws and penalties of God."
"But these so beauteous and resplendent things
That people littleness with various life;—
Why should destruction, rapine, war, and wrong
Engulf their myriads? Have they sinned like men?"
"Oh, blind—oh, deaf—oh, miserable soul!"
Replied Egeria. "Tell me, canst thou count
The happy multitudes before thee spread
In this one second of thine earthly time?
Wouldst fill the wholesome universe with flies,
And make the air too thick for human breath?
Death is no evil. Cease, O foolish man!

Thy querulous moaning, and consider Death
No longer as thy foe. A ministering saint,
Her hand shall guide thee, step by step, to God.
Be worthy of her, and so learn to live,
That every incarnation of thy soul,
In other worlds, and spheres, and firmaments,
Shall be more perfect. God's eternity
Is thine to live in :—on thyself depends
Whether for pain or pleasure—good or ill."

"Spirit of Nature, let me not complain !
Mine eyes are opened. I behold a dawn.
The glimmering radiance of a heavenly world
Opens before me, infinitely good.
Death is the mother of Life, and Life of Death.
Attraction and repulsion—heat and cold—
Stagnation and progression—good and ill—
Each is a perfect square that fits with each.
And foolish man, whose small horizon ends
Ere perfect knowledge of the truth begins,
Denies the wonders that he cannot see :—
As grubs and earth-worms might deny the sun,
Or flies ephemeral ignore the year."

CANTO III.—THE STILL WATERS.

AMID the water-lilies of the lake
A boat sped noiselessly. The rowers twain
Lay on their oars. Most lovely was the night.
The round full moon reflected on the breast
Of those calm waters her unclouded orb.
The mountain tops were bathed in silver sheen.
A holy silence, a divine repose,
Slept on the waters, on the hills and skies.
Nought but the ripple lapping on the boat
Broke on the stillness. All the winds were hushed.
A deep serenity pervaded air.
The silent stars, revolving evermore
With ceaseless motion through the Infinitude,
Preached to the soul their holy homilies
Of little Time, and great Eternity.
"Here, on the bosom of this quite lake,"
Said Julian, whispering to his bride betrothed,
"We sit in presence of the Universe.
We three are to ourselves humanity.
For us the moonlight sheds its ray benign—
For us the lake reposes in its calm,
And the far mountains stand in purple gloom—
For us the awful stars look through the deep

And infinite ether on their sister world,
Creatures of power, and majesty, and joy,
Each laden with its freight of life and death—
We three—we happy three! Oh, Ellen mine!
I have been victim of misanthropy—
I have despaired of Man, of Earth, of Heaven;
But in the quiet beauty of this night,
And in the sweet endearment of those eyes,
I re-awake to happiness and love.
Oh, Love! fair mother of beatitude,
How has my tongue blasphemed thine influence
How has my heart denied thy holiness!
But I have seen the Spirit of the world,
Talked with Egeria at her sacred fount,
And learned in dreams that evil may be good,
Had man the alchemy to work it out."

"We three—we happy three," said Montague,
"If this thy saying, ponder it again.
Didst never, thinking of the fate of man,
His wisdom and his ignorance, discern
The three-fold nature of his mortal life—
The balance, and the perfect harmony
Of three, the holy number of the world?
Past, Present, Future, merging into one—
And one for ever in the Eternal Mind?
Beginning—middle—end—the sum of things?
Foundation, superstructure, and the roof,

The three necessities that form the house?
The rise, the culmination, and the fall?
The blossom, the fruition, and the seed?
The heart to love, the brain to understand,
The hand to execute?—All these are three,
But one in harmony of great design.
All colours haunt the centre of the prism.
Truth, Beauty, Goodness—Goodness, Beauty, Truth
Mingle for ever into one sweet tune—
The mystic music of the universe.
'T is our allotted task upon the earth
To pluck the mystery out, and make it plain,
And so to balance, in our deed and thought,
Beauty with Truth, and Goodness with them both,
That all our being, fused in harmony,
May make sweet music at the throne of God.

"Behold the Truth, how heavenly fair is she—
How perfect in herself! how great! how small!
The heaven of heavens cannot contain her form,
And yet the atom tossed upon the wind,
Or trampled by the insect in its walk,
Enfolds her majesty. Truth manifold,
Consistent, universal, self-sustained;—
Her smallest fragment is a world complete,
And every fragment fits into the chain,
Which girdles Heaven and holds Eternity.

"Beauty, divinest attribute of things,

How true is she! The falsehood of a line
Mars her perfection. Earth's creative soul,
She fashions Nature in her heavenly mould,
And men and angels worship at her feet.
Her smiles are light, her words are harmonies,
Her touch is rapture. Heaven is full of her,
And Earth does homage to her power divine,
Through all gradations of its teeming life,
From meanest animalcule of the dust,
To the completest organism of man.

"And Goodness, crown and centre of the arch,
How heavenly beautiful, how true is she!
Without her aid, Truth were not possible,
And Beauty's self would grow deformity.

"The perfect man were he—the man unborn—
In whom these three with a divine accord
Centred and poised. Threefold our natures are,
That we may cultivate the germ of each:
And he, whatever be his name or fame,
His wealth or station, power or circumstance,
Who fails in either, is the less a man."

"I see thy thought," said Julian. "Sane and strong
The perfect man, if such a man could be
To shame the poor abortions of our time,
Would stand in all his physical attributes,
Beauteous as young Apollo of the Greeks,
Might in his hand, and glory on his brow;

In all his moral attributes as good
As the divine exemplar of mankind
In intellectual majesty as true
As fabled Pallas. If such man there were,
Not erring man, but angel, were his name."
"Be it our task," said Montague, "to strive
To climb this far and fair ideal height.
We may not reach it, but all efforts made,
Bring us the nearer to the mountain top.
To such a man how excellent were life!
His life how excellent to all his kind!
To him all nature would pay fealty.
His many sided heart and intellect,
Would draw the sustenance of hope and joy
From seeming evil. Him the Heavens would love,
Him would the Earth receive as king and lord,
Him would each plastic circumstance obey,
Him would all charities, and kindly deeds,
Crown and ennoble. Him, though men denied,
Or scorned or hated, would an inner power,
Raise to a height beyond the reach of harm."
"Who shall attain such heavenly altitude?"
Said mournful Julian, dubious of himself.
"Alas! we are the slaves of circumstance.
Our fathers and forefathers, not ourselves,
Shaped not alone our outward lineaments,
And gave us strength, and fears, and weaknesses,

But moulded to the fashion of their own,
Our hearts and characters. Who shall escape
The thraldom of his country and his time?
Who shall be wiser than the living age?
Men's hearts are blurred, and blotted, and defaced,
And all their primal purity is lost.
No dye shall make the blackness white again,
No hand uplift them. The unhappy Jews
Who crucified the Lord of Heaven and Earth,
Were but the types of modern prejudice;
For were the Saviour to descend again,
Amid the money-changers of our marts,
To preach the doctrine that he taught before,
The self-adoring hypocrites would swarm
In every market-place, and shout his name,
With curses on his innovating creed;
And slay him, if they could, a second time.
'Love them that hate you,' spake the word divine;
'Do good for evil: take no heed of days;
Nor make long prayers in presence of the crowd.
The Lord provideth for the trusting heart:
Behold the white-robed lilies of the field,
Shall He who clothes them in their loveliness,
And feeds the sparrow, not provide for you?
Love one another. If your brother smite,
Smite not again: but turn the wounded cheek,
And shame him with the light of charity.'

Though many preach, how few perform the law!
Where is the Christian of our Christendom?
Eyes cannot see him—sense discover him.
The very Christian in all deed and thought
Existed in this wretched world but once,
And He was hated, scourged, and crucified."

"Perchance thou 'rt right; but from thy point of view
All is misanthropy. His kingdom comes.
Why hate mankind, because they are mankind,
And will not march so rapidly to truth
As in thine eager haste thou 'dst have them run?
Poor insect, fluttering for a summer's day
Upon the glassy bosom of a pool,
Canst thou conceive the dread profundity
Of the Atlantic or Pacific seas?
What is thy life, that in its little space
Thou wouldst accomplish what a thousand years
May fail to work; but which, in God's good time,
Shall dawn upon the long-benighted world?
Thou art too sanguine for philosophy,
And too intolerant of others' faults,
To preach the faith of Christian charity.
Reform thyself, and poise thy nature well:
The perfect balance shall restore thy peace,
And reconcile thee with humanity."

"I have no hatred of my fellow-men,

But pity for their callous ignorance—
Their obstinate prejudice—their hopeless wrong.
But let them grope, and wander where they list,—
Why should I strive to guide them, and still vex
My heart and spirit with their stubbornness?
I will contract my circle to my home,
And live for duty, loving and beloved;
And if I shed within that little sphere
The light of happiness, I'll be content,
And leave my conscience in the hands of God."

Upon him Ellen turned her beaming eyes,
Suffused with hopeful joy. Their souls were one.
True love had conquered false philosophy.
"I'll tell thee, Julian, of an apologue,"
Said she, and blushed all crimson at the sound
Of her own voice amid the disputants.
"In ancient time, two acorns, in their cups,
Shaken by winds and ripeness from the tree,
Dropped side by side into the ferns and grass:
'Where have I fall'n—to what base region come?'
Exclaimed the one. 'The joyous breeze no more
Rocks me to slumber on the sheltering bough;
The sunlight streams no longer on my face;
I look no more from altitudes serene
Upon the world reposing far below;
Its plains, its hills, its rivers, and its woods.
To me the nightingale sings hymns no more;

But I am made companion of the worm,
And rot on the chill earth. Around me grow
Nothing but useless weeds, and grass, and fern,
Unfit to hold companionship with me.
Ah, me! most wretched! rain, and frost, and dew,
And all the pangs and penalties of earth,
Corrupt me where I lie—degenerate.'
And thus the acorn made its daily moan.
The other raised no murmur of complaint,
And looked with no contempt upon the grass,
Nor called the branching fern a worthless weed,
Nor scorned the woodland flowers that round it blew.
All silently and piously it lay
Upon the kindly bosom of the earth.
It blessed the warmth with which the noon-day sun
Made fruitful all the ground; it loved the dews,
The moonlight and the snow, the frost and rain,
And all the change of seasons as they passed.
It sank into the bosom of the soil:
The bursting life, enclosed within its husk,
Broke through its fetters; it extended roots,
And twined them freely in the grateful ground;
It sprouted up, and looked upon the light;
The sunshine fed it; the embracing air
Endowed it with vitality and strength;
The rains of heaven supplied it nourishment,
And so from month to month, and year to year,

It grew in beauty and in usefulness,
Until its large circumference enclosed
Shelter for flocks and herds; until its boughs
Afforded homes for happy multitudes,
The dormouse, and the chaffinch, and the jay,
And countless myriads of minuter life;
Until its bole, too vast for the embrace
Of human arms, stood in the forest depths,
The model and the glory of the wood:—
Its sister acorn perished in its pride."

"I thank thee, Ellen, for the apologue.
Thine acorn lived its life, and so will I.
Be thou my sunshine, and I 'll live to thee:
And in our shadow, kindly charities
Shall make a daily blessing of our place."

CANTO IV.—THE UPLAND STREAM.

"THE summer morning is not far advanced,"
Said Julian to his comrade Montague;
"The wind blows freshly, wilt thou trace with me
The mountain rill that tumbles from the height,
So upwards to the mountain top afar?"
"Right willingly, the joyous exercise
Shall give our limbs new vigour; every step
Lead us to calmer heights and purer air.
I love the exploration of a stream,
Upwards, still upwards, to its infant source;—
A life epitome; here, smooth the path,
And easy to the feet; here, difficult—
O'er crags, and stones, and jutting precipice.
Here in a pool the quiet water sleeps,
Like happy days which thou and I have passed;
There, down a gully of the rifted rock
Dashes and hurries, like those passionate hours
That we experience when our blood is hot,
Uncool'd by reason, suffering, and time.
Here, cupola'd by mingling ash and birch;
There, open to the sunlight and the breeze,
And redolent of hawthorn blooms and thyme,
Bog-myrtle, and the wild valerian.

Let us ascend: I'll bear thee company,
And leave Egeria at her fount below."
"Not so—her spirit shall consort with mine.
I have no need of thy mesmeric sleights
To summon to my presence, when I will,
The beautiful Egeria of my dreams.
For me she lives and moves—for me she speaks—
For me she sings celestial melodies.
It wants but effort of the active mind
To people Earth and Heaven with ministering sprites.
The young Aurora, with her rosy cheeks,
Sits, as of yore, at portals of the morn:
And thoughtful Hesper, with her starry eyes,
Looks, as in olden time, from day to night,
And makes both beautiful. Still in each oak,
As poets feigned, the Hamadryads dwell,
And whisper music from the rustling leaves.
Still on the mountain-slopes the Oreads roam,
And course the fleeting shadows of the clouds.
Still on the beach of the sonorous main
The youthful Nereids sport the live-long day,
Or dance by moonlight, when the tide at ebb
Leaves on the sands a circle wide enough
To form the flexile chain of linking hands,
And feet sequential to the harmony
Pealed by the invisible minstrels of the deep.
Still every fountain, every rill and stream,

Possesses in its cool translucent breast
A guardian spirit, who can talk and sing,
And utter oracles to thoughtful men.
The old thoughts never die. Immortal dreams
Outlive their dreamers, and are ours for aye.
No thought once formed and uttered can expire.
The lovely shapes that olden fancy drew
Are still the comrades of unwordly men,
And palpable to sight. All life decays,
And Death transforms it into newer life
With other features—but Eternal Thought
Defies decay. Egeria is as young
To thee and me, as in the ancient time,
When she appeared to Numa in the grove
And taught him wisdom: on her open brow
Three thousand years have striven in vain to leave
The slightest wrinkle. As she was, she is."

"Thoughts are immortal? I deny it not.
But what," said Montague, "were Numa's thoughts,
Inscribed in secret in those mystic tomes,
Which, buried with him for four hundred years,
Were brought to daylight by a busy fool—
Read, judged, condemned, and burned ingloriously,
Because one blockhead deemed them dangerous
To the false gods and prejudice of Rome?"

"They live," said Julian. "All that Numa learned
From solitary converse in the wilds,

With the fair spirit of the breathing world,
Others have learned. The lesson is the same.
The voice of Nature ever preaches truth :—
And Numa's truths, too mighty for his age,
Revived again. All thinkers, sages, bards,
Draw inspiration from the self-same source,
And sing in harmony the same old song;
Still old, still new. But we, discoursing here,
Will lose our morning. If our feet must scale
The craggy altitudes of these steep hills,
Four thousand feet above yon flowing tide,
We must ascend betimes, ere noon-day heats
Make climbing difficult. Let us depart
With flask in pocket, ashen staff in hand;—
We 'll meet Egeria on the mountain top."

So forth they went to trace the upland rill,
Discoursing as they went. The cloudless morn
Was redolent of sweets. High in the air,
Over his nest, the lark made psalmody.
The early bee, contented labourer,
Plied upon thistle-tops and heather-bells
His earnest task. All nature was astir,
Busy, and happy. Every living thing
Enjoyed its life. The pure and genial air—
The brisk, free exercise, and change of scene—
Each scene new beauty—brought to Julian's cheeks
The glow of health: with health came calmer thoug

And happier fancies, unremembered long.
They stood awhile beside a waterfall,
And watched in silence the descending stream,
Pouring the flood adown a precipice,
In foam-flakes silvery as the mountain snow,
And scattering upon either side the spray
That fed the yellow lichens of the rock,
And sprinkled moisture to the feathery fern,
And all the undergrowth of herb and flower.
"I 've not forgot," said Julian, "thy reproof,
That I was over-sanguine to be wise,
And hatched my theories with fruitless haste.—
Yet, when I think how slow a thing is truth—
Slow but immortal—I could weep to see
How slight and powerless a thing is man.
Behold this leaping streamlet that we track!
Adown these self-same rocks, in self-same course,
Its flood has poured, since Cæsar out of Gaul
Landed in Kent amid the savages.
When Numa closed in his barbaric Rome
The gates of Janus, and taught peace and love
To the fierce Romans, still this streamlet ran
With the same music that it makes for us.
When Sardanapalus expired in flame,
These harmless waters trickled down the hill.
When Cheops—if a Cheops ever were—
Built the first pyramid, with petty thought

But mighty tyranny, this mountain brook
Sang to the winds the same rejoicing tune,
That, leaping down the rocks, it sings for me.
When Moses worshipped upon Sinai's peak,
The spray of this glad torrent strewed around
Verdure and mosses, and the fresh spring flowers.
When Abram's herdsmen, and the hinds of Lot,
Quarrelled for pasture lands, this brooklet flowed,
A thing of beauty to the bathing birds,
That then, as now, dipped in its cooling breast
Their ruffled plumes. When Nimrod built his tower,
And asked the insurgent multitude to bend
In adoration of the majesty
Of him, first tyrant, first monopolist,
First king that claimed to rank among the gods,
These waters, from the hill-top to the sea,
Ran 'twixt these banks. When Noah and his sons
Came down from Ararat with bird and beast,
The murmur of this stream amid the grass
Made pleasant music in angelic ears.
In all that time, whilst men have lived and died,
And generations perished like the leaves
With which the nipping Autumn strews the ground:
Whilst mighty empires rose, and lived their day—
And, like small cressets, sick for want of oil,
Flickered and vanished into utter dark—
Where is the moral and religious truth

Which, promulgated then, has run the round
Of men and nations? Tell me—is there one?
I know it not. But in this gulf of Time
How many fatal errors have been born,
And reached their full maturity of harm,
To blind men's physical and mental sight,
And dull with smoke, obscurity, and haze,
The primal beauty of their Intellect!"
"'T is even so," said Montague; "yet still
A progress has been made. The human race
Advances palpably in its career.
Old errors fall, and old truths, seeming new,
Shine on the nations with a steadier light,
And point the way from sloughs of Ignorance
To the firm ground where they must stand at last."
They sat them down upon a boulder stone
In the mid-channel of the chafing stream,
And bathed their faces in a limpid pool
Scooped by the waters of a thousand years
In the hard bosom of the porphyry rock;
And, resting for awhile in the ascent,
Refreshed their throats with moisture. As they sat,
A bee alighting on a clover-tuft
Ceased for an instant its laborious hum,
And peered in petals of the purple flower
With busy pleasure. "There," said Montague,
"Yon little insect, wiser than mankind,

Might teach the world a lesson that it needs."
"What! in its ruthless murder of the drones,
And pampering of a fat luxurious queen?"
"Not so; but in its love of daily toil—
A toil unselfish. In the social hive
One labours for the whole community,
And the community for every one.
Toil is their joy: but intellectual man,
Not comprehending God's all-wise decree,
Passed, not in vengeance, but in love divine,
Deems toil a curse, and throws the burden off
Upon his weaker brother if he can.
Hence pride and pomp, and arrogance and sloth,
And myriad evils which the wise deplore.
Hence slavery and modern selfishness,
And over-reaching, grinding, cheating Trade,
And Mammon-worship in all odious forms—
The degradation of humanity.
'Each for himself—and the Great God for all,'
Exclaim the people. Is the doctrine wise?
Better, far better, if the world would say—
'Each man for all men—the great God for each.'
Oh! what a great and glorious thing is work,
Did man with wisdom look upon the world!
All Earth and Heaven—the teeming Universe
Exist by labour. The majestic sun
Revolves for ever, shedding life and joy

To all the minor orbs that round him burn:
For them he labours, and for them exists,
And they for him, in mutual harmony.
The firmaments and galaxies, thick strewn
O'er infinite space, obey the same behest.—
Labour for ever, is their law of life;
Their labour, happiness. From great to small,
From small to smallest things invisible,
The law of Labour rules the happy world.
But man, the misinterpreter of God,
Perverts this chiefest blessing to a curse,
And makes his brother labour overmuch,
That he may slumber and grow fat in sloth,
Misusing earth, his brother, and himself."

"Aye! it is sad," said Julian, "to reflect
That sixty centuries have failed to teach
The dignity, the beauty, and the joy,
The piety and usefulness of work!
'T is but excess of labour that is pain—
Just as excess of food, or wine, or rest—
Or any blessing that mankind abuse.
The many toil, till strength and spirit fail,
And the heart sickens; not that they may live,
But that a selfish and degenerate few
May fatten on the harvest of their bones.
How shall the many in their daily need
Their slavery *to the* physical wants of flesh,

Rise from the degradation of their lot?
It needs morality for men to know,
That, though they grovel, they might stand erect;
And that the slave might, if he would, be free.
It needs the intellect to point the way,
And lead the stumbling groper into light.
And how shall Earth's unhappy multitudes,
Savage or cultured, swarth or white of skin,
Slaves to a bodily toil that knows no end,
Balance the threefold nature of their life?
If every feeling, energy, and wish
Be centered in an agony for bread,
How shall the manners grow, the heart expand?
How shall the crawling intellect be taught
To soar with golden wings, and face the sun?
Oh! we have started badly in the race,
Turned God's primeval bounty to a wrong,
Lowered our dignity, despised our Earth,
Competed with our brother as a foe,
And, like to starving sailors on a raft,
Floating forlorn upon a stormy deep,
Have looked with hungry eyes of savage greed
On one another, saying in our hearts—
'What matters who may die, if I may live?'
Alas! alas! there is no remedy!"

"Believe it not! the old traditions fade,
And in the fulness of the appointed time,

Men shall awaken into purer life.
But let us onwards! Far above our heads
The mountain looms. We must forsake the rill,
So long the fair companion of our way,
And brace our strength to scale the granite peak,
That towers in naked majesty afar;
The clouds beneath it, the blue heavens above,
Looking o'er ocean, and the ambient land,—
Hill paramount, and watch-tower of the clime."

CANTO V.—THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

A glorious vision burst upon their sight,
As on the topmost peak they took their stand,
To gaze from that clear centre on the world,
And measure with their proud delighted eyes
The vast circumference, whose radius stretched,
Seaward and landward, each for fifty miles.
Beneath their feet a burnished ocean lay,
Glittering in sunshine. Far adown, like snow,
Shook from the bosom of a wintry cloud,
And drifting on the wind in feathery flakes
The sea-gulls sailed betwixt the earth and sky,
Or, floating on the bosom of the deep,
Pursued the herring shoal with dexterous aim.
Far, far away on the horizon's edge,
The white sails of the homeward scudding ships
Gleamed like the lilies in a garden plot,
Or like the scattered shreds of fleecy cloud
Left by the Evening at the gate of Night,
To shimmer in the leaden-coloured sky,
And drink the splendour of the harvest moon,
Their glancing breasts reflected from afar
The noonday sunlight.—Landward when they looked,
The earth beneath them seemed as it had boiled,
And tossed, and heaved, in some great agony;

Till suddenly, at fiat of the Lord,
The foaming waves had hardened into hills,
And mountains, multitudinous and huge,
Of jagged outline, piled and overpiled,
One o'er the other. Calmly the grey heads
Of these earth-fathers pointed up to heaven;—
Titanic sentinels, who all the night
Look at their kindred sentinels, the stars,
To hear the march and tramp of distant worlds,
And measure by millenniums, not by years,
The awful growth and progress of the time!
Between the bases of the lesser hills,
Green valleys, musical with lowing kine,
And watered by the upland overflow,
Stretched in their beauty. In the hollows slept
Clear lakes, which from those azure heights appeared
Small as the basins where the Oreads
Might bathe, at morning-burst, their tender limbs.
Most beautiful the nearer landscape lay;
The distant panorama, more confused,
Melted away in purple haziness.

"I am so happy in such scenes as these,
And yet so sad, and so dissatisfied,"
Said Julian, gazing on the quiet sea,
"I feel one moment I could leap for joy,
And in the next, that I could lie me down
And *weep that my enjoyment* is so small,

And that such beauty and sublimity,
Such glory and such wonder, should not be
Part of myself for ever. Oh, thou Deep!
Rolling beneath me thine eternal waves,
I feel myself thine equal, as I stand
And look upon thee from a height like this,
With thronging thoughts no tongue may ever speak!
Thou blue sky! circling all in thine embrace;
Oh, how I envy the air-cleaving wings
Of Alpine eagles, and the liberty
Of motion, unrestrained by clogs of Earth!
Ye hills, I love ye! Oh, ye mountain tops!
Lifting serenely your transcendent brows
To catch the earliest glimpses of the dawn,
And hold the latest radiance of the West,
To gild you with its glory, while the world
Hastens to slumber in the glooms below;
It is a pain to know ye, and to feel,
That nothing can express the deep delight
With which your beauty and magnificence
Fill to o'erflowing the ecstatic mind.
Spirit of Nature! Nymph Egeria!
Here is thy home:—appear, and lend me words
To hymn my reverence and gratitude!
I feel thy presence in my brain and heart:
'T is with thine eyes I see; 't is with thine ears
I hear the murmurs of that mighty deep.

Where float the planets and the galaxies.
Oh, give me words; give me still keener sight,
And let me understand the hidden things,
The holy mysteries, thou must have heard
In thy communion with the Universe.
Spirit of Nature! Holiest!—I am thine!"
His rapture overcame him as he spoke;
And, on the mountain top, he fell supine,
In a half slumber, filled with blessedness.
'T was but few minutes.—Montague knelt down,
And gathered from a crevice of the rock
A little handful of the virgin snow,
That in the shadows of this lonely place
Had lain all Summer, sheltered from the heat.
With this he rubbed his forehead and his hands,
And called him by his name. The consciousness,
Entranced and wandering, but not destroyed,
Blazed o'er his spirit with a sudden flash.
"Didst thou not see her, Montague?" he said.
"I think, like Máhomet, I've been in Heaven,
Caught in a rapture to the firmament!
How long upon this awful mountain-top
Hast thou been with me?" "Not one little hour,"
His friend replied; "and, not ten minutes since,
Thou stood'st apostrophizing Earth and Heaven,
Maddened and reeling in an ecstacy."
"'T is strange, dear Montague?—yet must be so!

But in those minutes I have trod the floors
Of heavenly places; heard angelic things;
And, guided by Egeria, have seen
A vision of the world, that was, that is,
And shall be in the fulness of the time."
"Tell me the vision. I remember well,"
Said Montague, "when I was in my teens,
I rode a fiery charger to the chase,
And the beast stumbled, though I know not how,
And threw me to the ground. I felt no pain—
But in a quiet and delicious sleep
Lay with a bleeding forehead in the mire,
One minute only—or, it might be, less.
In that one minute I became a child,
And, going back a dozen years of time,
Wandered upon the margin of the sea,
And gathered shells and tangle on the beach;—
Culled garlands by the verdant meadow paths,
And plaited rushes for a rural crown
Begemmed with poppies and convolvulus.
I swam in rivers, proud of growing strength,
And moped in colleges my teens away.
And then I wandered in a moonlight night,
Breathing sweet folly to a willing maid,
And clasped her soft and unretiring hand,
With pleasure which no waking could afford.
Looking for answers in her eloquent eyes

To thoughts, unspoken still, but understood.
A groom, officious, roused me from my trance,
And raised me on the sward to bathe my brow.
It seemed an age since I had dropped asleep,
But there, beside me, stood the panting horse.
I vaulted on his back, unhurt—though bruised,
And since that day have clung to the belief
That time is but the creature of our thought,
And that the ages passed by Máhomet
Ere his descending pitcher reached the ground,
Were palpable realities to him,
And ran in actual cycles through his brain.
But I detain thee. Let me hear thy dream."

"Scarce had I called upon Egeria's name,
When to my sight upon this mountain top
In beauty and in glory she appeared.
I saw thee not. The crimson-coloured sun
Had sought his bright pavilion in the west,
And left the world in darkness. Earth and sea
Lay in the shadow of gloom, invisible.
I was alone with Nature and the stars,
Alone, alone, and humbled in the sight
Of worlds, and galaxies, and firmaments,
And nebulæ upon the verge of space,
Whose light, far reaching to our little globe,
Struck on mine eyes, not as it shines to-day,
But as it shone when those swift travelling beams

Seventy millenniums down the abyss of Time
Sped to this juvenile and petty orb.
Egeria's face was radiant as she turned
Her eyes upon me in that lonely place.
Her right hand pointed to the sparkling sky,
As on the crag she stood, white-robed and pure,
And clear defined against the dark-blue heaven.
The northern streamers, t'wards the polar star,
Shot their electric threads of throbbing light,—
The banners of Eternity, that wave
Over the worlds and systems in their march
Accordant with the music of the spheres.
Egeria spake not; and my lips refused
To utter all the wild and billowy thoughts
That overpowered their faculty of speech,
And made them dumb—but I observed with awe,
And listened with intensity, to catch
The lightest whispers of her heavenly tongue.
Upon a sudden all the mountain-slope
Grew luminous, and I could hear the sound
Of sweet sad voices singing mournful songs.
'Thou calledst—I have come:' Egeria said.
'List what my sister spirits ever sing
To those who have the privilege to hear;—
A privilege for ever earned in pain,
And purchased by affliction, and deep thought.
By doubts, and fears, and silent agonies."

"I listened as she bade, and soft and clear,
heard the angelic voices, whisper words
)f mild expostulation with my soul.
:hese were their accents, if my sense can frame,
n human speech, such high and holy song :—

Why this longing, clay-clad spirit?
Why this fluttering of thy wings?
Why this striving to discover
Hidden and transcendant things?
Be contented in thy prison,
Thy captivity shall cease—
Taste the good that smiles before thee;—
Restless spirit, be at peace!

With the roar of wintry forests,
With the thunder's crash and roll,
With the rush of stormy waters,
Thou wouldst sympathize, O soul!
Thou wouldst ask them mighty questions
In a language of their own,
Untranslateable to mortals,
Yet not utterly unknown.

Thou wouldst fathom Life and Being,
Thou wouldst see through Birth and Death,
Thou wouldst solve the eternal riddle—
Thou, a speck, a ray, a breath!

Thou wouldst look at stars and systems,
As if *thou* couldst understand
All the harmonies of Nature,
Struck by an Almighty hand.

With thy feeble logic, tracing
Upwards from effect to cause,
Thou art foiled by Nature's barriers,
And the limits of her laws.
Be at peace, thou struggling spirit!
Great Eternity denies
The unfolding of its secrets
In the circle of thine eyes.

Be contented with thy freedom—
Dawning is not perfect day;
There are truths thou canst not fathom,
Swaddled in thy robes of clay.
Rest in hope that if thy circle
Grow not wider here in Time,
God's Eternity shall give thee
Power of vision more sublime.

Clogg'd and bedded in the darkness,
Little germ, abide thine hour,
Thou 'lt expand, in proper season,
Into blossom, into flower.

Humble faith alone becomes thee
In the glooms where thou art lain:
Bright is the appointed future;
Wait;—thou shalt not wait in vain.

Cease thy struggling, feeble spirit!
Fret not at thy prison bars;
Never shall thy mortal pinions
Make the circuit of the stars.
Here on Earth are duties for thee
Suited to thine earthly scope;
Seek them, thou Immortal Spirit—
God is with thee, work in Hope.

"The voices ceased. Egeria laid her hand
pon my forehead, and the fruitful world
ıce more beneath me lay in golden light,
nd I beheld a vision of the Past.
was sad to look upon. The Earth was filled
ith hate and murder, cruelty and wrong;
ense Ignorance pervaded all the lands.
ıe strong were tyrants, and the weak were slaves.
ıul Superstition stupified the mind;
ıe sanguinary priests of odious gods
ıled men by terror; human sacrifice
ılluted with its smoke the sickened air,
ıd *constant war strewed* earth with bones and blood.

"It vanished—and I saw the actual world
Spreading beneath me all its climes and lands.
'T was robed in purer splendour. Time had wrought
Beneficent changes in the hearts of men;
But a great problem which the ages past
Had never posed, was clamorous to be solved;—
How mighty populations were to live
In narrow area, by the ancient rule
Of competition—each man against each?
And whether union, often tried by men
For purpose of destruction, war, and wrong,
Might not, if tried for purposes of peace,
Construction, industry, and mutual aid,
Lead the sad nations of a world effete
From darkness into light—from sea to land?—
The mighty truths were gushing into flower,
Old evils lived, but deadly war had sprung
Betwixt the embattled hosts of Right and Wrong,
And Victory was sitting in the clouds,
Uncertain of the issue. When this passed,
A brighter vision broke upon my soul—
The promised reign of righteousness had come—
The lion and the lamb lay down in peace,
The nations turned their swords to pruning-hooks
And studied war no more. The Law of Love
Made other law a useless formula.
Labour was pleasure, Duty was delight,

God was sole king, and every human heart
Gave Him allegiance. I beheld no more.
And, turning to Egeria, kissed the hem
Of her white garments. 'Mortal man,' she said,
Too long bewildered in the mazes dim
Of false philosophies,—thy path grows clear!
Descend again into the world of life
And take new guidance. Let philosophy
Attune as erst thy solitary hours
To harmonies, unheard by worldly ears;
But let true Piety thy guardian be,
The guide and the companion of thy days.

'O Piety! O heavenly Piety!
She is not rigid as fanatics deem,
But warm as Love, and beautiful as Hope.

'Prop of the weak, the crown of humbleness,
The clue of doubt, the eyesight of the blind,
The heavenly robe and garniture of clay!

'He that is crowned with that supernal crown,
Is lord and sovereign of himself and Fate,
And angels are his friends and ministers.

'Clad in that raiment, ever white and pure,
The wayside mire is harmless to defile,
And rudest storms sweep impotently by.

'The pilgrim wandering amid crags and pits,
Supported by that staff shall never fall:—
He smiles at peril and defies the storm.

'Shown by that clue, the doubtful path is clear,
The intricate snares and mazes of the world
Are all unlabyrinthed and bright as day.

'Sweet Piety! divinest Piety!
She has a soul capacious as the spheres,
A heart as large as all humanity.

'Who to his dwelling takes that visitant,
Has a perpetual solace in all pain,
A friend and comforter in every grief.

'The noblest domes, the haughtiest palaces,
That know not her, have ever open gates
Where Misery may enter at her will.

'But from the threshold of the poorest hut,
Where she sits smiling, Sorrow passes by,
And owns the spell that robs her of her sting.'

"Once more upon me, with benignant smile,
Egeria looked, and might have spoken more,
But that thy hand aroused me from the trance
Of heavenly ecstacy in which I lay.

"Let us descend the rugged mountain side;
To-morrow I shall mingle with the world,
And do my part as shall become a man.
With thy fair sister for my wife and friend,
I will indulge no more in dreams like these,
Nor feed my spirit on the airy food
Of speculation. Welcome, busy Earth!
I 'll plough thee', till thee', from thy bosom draw

Wealth for the needy, raiment for the bare;
And for the widow and the fatherless,
The sustenance and blessing that they crave!
Welcome to bodily and mental toil!
Welcome to duty! welcome to my kind!
The world is mine to hold and to enjoy—
I 'll live to Nature, and confide in Heaven."

ANGEL VISITS.

I.

"Thou 'rt old, grandfather, old and blind,
But ever cheerful, good and kind.
I love, when early Summer blooms,
And meads are lavish of perfumes,
To see thee in thy garden chair,
With silvery locks and forehead bare,
And face upturned, as thou hadst striven
To look through darkness into Heaven.

II.

"And oft when o'er the frozen wold
The wintry tempests whistle cold,
When strolling gusts, in sport or ire,
Howl down our chimney at the fire;
When crickets chirrup on the hearth,
As if they shared the children's mirth,
My last day's lesson I repeat,
Or read my Bible at thy feet.

III.

"But now the Summer days have come,
With song of birds and insect-hum;
The earth is bright with flowers and leaves;
The swallows dart from cottage eaves;
The shadows through the foliage fall,
Like net-work, on the garden wall;
And ship-like clouds go sailing by,
In the calm ocean of the sky.

IV.

"Around our porch the tendrils twine,
And bind-weeds clasp the eglantine.
The summer day is fair and mild,
Come, lean upon thy little child,
And let me guide thee to thy seat;—
I'll do my knitting at thy feet,
And, should the time be dull or long,
I'll read, or sing my last new song.

V.

"But far more happy I should be,
To sit, and hear, and learn from thee.
Oft when thou 'rt musing all alone,
No eye upon thee but mine own,
I hear half-spoken words that seem
Replies to questions in a dream,
And watch, observant, from my place,
The *placid rapture* on thy face.

VI.

"And it would please me wouldst thou tell
Thine own, thy little Rosabel,
What thoughts, amid thy sight's eclipse,
Can bring the smiles upon thy lips.
Old age, I've heard, is full of care,
But thou art happy, thine is fair;
So fair—and yet it cannot be—
I think that Angels visit thee."

VII.

"Dear Rosabel, 't is even so!
There are more Angels than we know.
Lend me thy hand, my seat prepare,
Let me inhale the morning air,
Receive the sunlight on my cheek,
And feel thy presence as I speak,
And I will tell of Angels three,
Who daily come and visit me.

VIII.

"Though I am frail, and old, and blind,
God sends his sunshine to my mind.
'T was He bestowed the visual ray,
'T was He who took the gift away;
But when His chastening hand withdrew
Earth's outward forms from sensuous view,
He opened to my mental sight
The inner spirit infinite.

IX.

"And self-communion, calm and long—
Deep musings upon right and wrong,
And conflicts with the pride and sin,
That ever surged and swoll within,
Cleared from my soul some mists obscure,
And filled it with revealings pure;
I knew myself, and, humbled low,
Drew comfort in my deepest woe.

X.

"I see no more the fields and bowers,
Nor endless beauty of the flowers;
I see no more the rivers run,
Nor hill-tops gilded by the sun;
I see no more Creation's grace;
I see no more thy gentle face;
And all the glory of the skies
Is hidden from my withered eyes.

XI.

"But when I hear the wild wind call
To forest boughs that answer all—
The sedges rustling in the lake—
The black-bird singing in the brake—
The far off murmurs of the shore—
Deep-throated ocean's moan and roar;—
Remembrance wakens in my mind,
And *paints the pictures* of the blind.

XII.

"'Tis then an Angel, one of three,
Descends to bear me company.
Sweet are the accents of his tongue,
He keeps my heart for ever young;
In his companionship I stray,
Back to my childhood's early day,
And live again a wondering boy,
Heir of a world of life and joy.

XIII.

"With him I hold communion fit,
His voice makes music where I sit.
I listen, and before me pass
World-shadows in a mystic glass:
The torrent falls, the landscape spreads,
The steadfast forests nod their heads,
And the eternal oceans roll,
In the clear mirror of my soul.

XIV.

"Whene'er the early cuckoo's voice
Bids me and all the meads rejoice;
Whene'er I find a new delight,
In opening day, or closing night;
Whene'er I sit in sun or shade,
And bless the world and Him who made,
And feel the joys I cannot see,
I know this Angel visits me.

XV.

"And evermore, when he departs,
Another cheers my heart of hearts,
With soft blue eyes—two azure spheres,
Bright with the luxury of tears.
Sweet is the song of early birds,
Yet sweeter far are human words—
This Angel loves them, so do I;
He links me to Humanity.

XVI.

"Whene'er thy father, pleased with home,
Has smiles for all who go or come;
Whene'er, his daily labour done,
He breathes his evening orison;
Whene'er thy mother, good and mild,
Sings lullaby to soothe her child;
I feel a sympathy sincere,
And know this Angel hovers near.

XVII.

"Whene'er I hear the children play
With many a chant and roundelay;
Whene'er the trample of their feet
Makes music round my lonely seat;
Whene'er I hear thee sing thy song,
In happy innocence of wrong,
And love all children, thee, the best;
I know that Angel is my guest.

XVIII.

"Whene'er I hear of generous thought,
Of noble deeds by manhood wrought,
Of patience, long and sorely tried,
Walking with virtue side by side,
Of love supreme amid distress,
Of courage great in gentleness,
And feel the tears suffuse mine eyes,
I share angelic sympathies.

XIX.

"Whene'er I hear of sin and guilt,
Of human blood in warfare spilt,
Of wrong and suffering unrelieved,
Of tender innocence aggrieved,
Of harsh oppression, hate, and scorn,
Yet feel not utterly forlorn,
But hopeful of a time to be,
I'm sure that Angel visits me.

XX.

"And Rosabel, dear Rosabel,
Another Angel, mark me well,
Sits at my side by night and day,
And teaches me to hope and pray;
He bids all doubt and sorrow cease,
He fills my soul with heavenly peace,
And sings me the eternal hymn
Of the adoring seraphim.

XXI.

"And oft, when sleep forsakes mine eyes,
He lifts a veil of mysteries,
And shows me, strong in humble faith,
Life-shadows, and the things of death;
He takes the terror from the tomb,
And strews rich germs of heavenly bloom,
Upon the dark sepulchral clod,
That Angel is the love of God.

XXII.

"O Angel! heavenly Angel mine!
His words are harmonies divine;
In his companionship serene,
All earthly joys are poor and mean:—
The world hath come, the world must go—
The immortal longings throb and glow—
I feel no more the primal curse,
I clasp the boundless universe.

XXIII.

"And yet I doubt, O daughter dear,
If all these Angels hover here—
So similar is each to each,
So like in feature, form, and speech,
So linked in one celestial plan
Are love of Nature, God, and Man,
I cannot think that they are three;—
'T*is but one Angel* visits me."

JUBAL AND HIS CHILDREN.

"Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."—
GENESIS, iv., 21.

I.

"Father," said Jubal's eldest son,
"The skies were robed in gloom;
Cloud struck on cloud, and long and loud
I heard the tempests boom:
Like chariots rattling through the stars,
I heard their axles roll;
Heaven's pavement flashed; the thunders crashed—
'Twas music to my soul."

II.

"Father," said Jubal's second son,
"I walked beside the sea:
With mighty roar against the shore
The waves were dashing free;
The waves and winds, together loosed,
Went mad, beyond controul:
With joy, yet fear, I leap'd to hear—
'Twas music to my soul."

III.

"Father," said Jubal's younger son,
"I roam'd the forest through;
The northern blast, careering past,
With fitful anger blew;
The oak trees bowed their lofty heads,
While from their branches stole
An awful rhyme, a song sublime—
'T was music to my soul."

IV.

"Father," said Jubal's youngest son,
"Beside the rock's grey wall,
I climbed alone the mossy stone,
To hear the torrent fall;
Ever it chants a solemn hymn,
The waters rush and roll,
They leap and play, in foam and spray—
'T is music to my soul."

V.

"Father," his eldest daughter said,
"The stream runs freely by;
The violets blink upon its brink,
Its breast reflects the sky;
It sings all day a cheerful song
Beneath the grassy knoll;
Its pebbles chafe—its ripples laugh—
'T is *music to my* soul."

VI.

"Father," his second daughter said,
"I heard the sky-lark sing
Up in the air, a jewel fair,
On forehead of the spring;
I know not what the song might be,
It seemed like rapture whole;
A melody—a mystery—
'T was music to my soul."

VII.

"Father," his youngest daughter said,
"I listened, and I heard,
At midnight deep, when half asleep,
The whisper of a word.
It was my mother at my bed,
One hasty kiss she stole,
On lips and cheek—I could not speak,
'T was music to my soul."

VIII.

And Jubal, to his children's voice,
No word in answer made;
But still he wrought, as if in thought
His questioning fingers strayed.
At length his eyes, with keen delight,
Shot rays like burning coal;
"Oh, children mine! a power divine,
Is bursting on my soul!"

IX.

He sought the wild wood solitude,
And supplicated heaven;
The floods of music o'er him rushed—
The needful strength was given:
And first, to please his daughters mild,
The gentle harp he strung,
Then for his sons built organ pipes,
And struck till echo rung.

X.

"Joy! children, joy!" he shouted forth,
"Be all your anthems poured!
The organ swell shall ever tell
The glory of the Lord.
But when you sing of earth and men,
Of human loves and fears,
Your harps shall sound in softer strains,
Harmonious with the spheres."

YOUTH AND SORROW.

I.

"Get thee back, Sorrow, get thee back!
My brow is smooth, mine eyes are bright,
My limbs are full of health and strength,
My cheeks are fresh, my heart is light.

So, get thee back! oh, get thee back!
Consort with age, but not with me;
Why shouldst thou follow on my track?
I am too young to live with thee."

II.

"O foolish Youth, to scorn thy friend!
To harm thee wherefore should I seek?
I would not dim thy sparkling eyes,
Nor blight the roses on thy cheek.
I would but teach thee to be true;
And should I press thee overmuch,
Ever the flowers that I bedew,
Yield sweetest fragrance to the touch."

III.

"Get thee back, Sorrow, get thee back!
I like thee not, thy looks are chill.
The sunshine lies upon my heart,
Thou showest me the shadow still.
So, get thee back! oh, get thee back!
Nor make me prematurely grey;
Why shouldst thou follow on my track?
Let me be happy while I may."

IV.

"Good friend, thou needest sage advice:
I'll keep thy heart from growing proud,
I'll fill thy mind with kindly thoughts,
And link thy pity to the crowd.

Wouldst have a heart of pulseless stone?
Wouldst be too happy to be good?
Nor make a human woe thine own,
For sake of human brotherhood?"

V.

"Get thee back, Sorrow, get thee back!
Why should I weep while I am young?
I have not piped—I have not danced—
My morning songs I have not sung.
The world is beautiful to me,
Why tarnish it to soul and sense?
Prithee begone! I 'll think of thee
Some half a hundred winters hence."

VI.

"O, foolish Youth, thou know'st me not;
I am the mistress of the earth—
'T is *I* give tenderness to love;
Enhance the privilege of mirth;
Refine the human gold from dross;
And teach thee, wormling of the sod,
To look beyond thy present loss
To thy eternal gain with God."

VII.

"Get thee back, Sorrow, get thee back!
I 'll learn thy lessons soon enough;
If virtuous pleasure smoothe my way,
Why shouldst thou seek to make it rough?

No fruit can ripen in the dark,
No bud can bloom in constant cold—
So, prithee, Sorrow, miss thy mark,
Or strike me not till I am old."

VIII.

"I am thy friend, thy best of friends;
No bud in constant heats can blow—
The green fruit withers in the drought,
But ripens where the waters flow.
The sorrows of thy youthful day
Shall make thee wise in coming years:
The brightest rainbows ever play
Above the fountains of our tears."

IX.

Youth frowned, but Sorrow gently smiled:
Upon his heart her hand she laid,
And all its latent sympathies
Throbbed to the fingers of the maid.
And when his head grew grey with Time,
He owned that Sorrow spoke the truth,
And that the harvest of his prime
Was ripened by the rains of Youth.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ENDURANCE.

I.

WERE the lonely acorn never bound
In the rude cold grasp of the rotting ground;
Did the rigid frost never harden up
The mould above its bursting cup;
Were it never soak'd in the rain and hail,
Or chill'd by the breath of the wintry gale,
It would not sprout in the sunshine free,
Or give the promise of a tree;
It would not spread to the summer air
Its lengthening boughs and branches fair,
To build a bower where, in starry nights,
Young Love might dream unknown delights;
Or stand in the woods among its peers,
Fed by the dews of a thousand years.

II.

Were never the dull, unseemly ore
Dragg'd from the depths where it slept of yore;
Were it never cast into searching flame,
To be purged of impurity and shame;
Were it never molten 'mid burning brands,
Or bruis'd and beaten by stalwart hands,
It would never be known as a thing of worth;
It would never emerge to a nobler birth;
It would never be form'd into mystic rings,
To fetter Love's erratic wings;

It would never shine amid priceless gems,
On the girth of imperial diadems;
Nor become to the world a power and a pride,
Cherished, adored, and deified.

III.

So, thou, O man of a noble soul,
Starting in view of a glorious goal,
Wert thou never exposed to the blasts, forlorn—
The storms of sorrow—the sleets of scorn;
Wert thou never refined in pitiless fire,
From the dross of thy sloth and mean desire;
Wert thou never taught to feel and know
That the truest love has its roots in woe,
Thou wouldst never unriddle the complex plan,
Or reach half way to the perfect man;
Thou wouldst never attain the tranquil height
Where wisdom purifies the sight,
And God unfolds to the humblest gaze
The bliss and beauty of His ways.

PROCRASTINATIONS.

I.

If Fortune with a smiling face
Strew roses on our way,
When shall we stoop to pick them up?
To-day, my love, to-day.

But should she frown with face of care,
And talk of coming sorrow,
When shall we grieve, if grieve we must?
To-morrow, love, to-morrow.

II.

If those who 've wrong'd us own their faults,
And kindly pity pray,
When shall we listen and forgive?
To-day, my love, to-day.
But, if stern Justice urge rebuke,
And warmth from Memory borrow,
When shall we chide—if chide we dare?
To-morrow, love, to-morrow.

III.

If those to whom we owe a debt
Are harmed unless we pay,
When shall we struggle to be just?
To-day, my love, to-day.
But if our debtor fail our hope
And plead his ruin thorough,
When shall we weigh his breach of faith?
To-morrow, love, to morrow.

IV.

If Love, estranged, should once again
Her genial smile display,
When shall we kiss her proffered lips?
To-day, my love, to-day.

But, if she would indulge regret,
Or dwell with bygone sorrow,
When shall we weep—if weep we must?
To-morrow, love, to-morrow.

V.

For virtuous acts and harmless joys
The minutes will not stay;
We've always time to welcome them,
To-day, my love, to-day.
But care, resentment, angry words,
And unavailing sorrow,
Come far too soon, if they appear
To-morrow, love, to-morrow.

MY GARDEN GATE.

I.

STAND back, bewildering politics!
I've placed my fences round;
Pass on, with all your party tricks,
Nor tread my holy ground.
Stand back—I'm weary of your talk,
Your squabbles, and your hate:
You cannot enter in this walk—
I've closed my garden gate.

II.

Stand back, ye thoughts of trade and pelf!
I have a refuge here;
I wish to commune with myself—
My mind is out of gear.
These bowers are sacred to the page
Of philosophic lore;
Within these bounds no envies rage—
I've shut my garden door.

III.

Stand back, Frivolity and Show,
It is a day of spring;
I want to see my roses blow,
And hear the blackbird sing.
I wish to prune my apple-trees,
And nail my peaches straight;
Keep to the causeway, if you please—
I've shut my garden gate.

IV.

I have no room for such as you,
My house is somewhat small:
Let Love come here, and Friendships true—
I'll give them welcome all;
They will not scorn my household stuff,
Or criticise my store.
Pass on—the world is wide enough—
I've shut my garden door.

V.

Stand back, ye Pomps! and let me wear
The liberty I feel.
I have a coat at elbows bare—
I love its *deshabille*.
Within these precincts let me rove,
With Nature, free from state;
There is no tinsel in the grove—
I've shut my garden gate.

VI.

What boots continual glare and strife?
I cannot always climb;
I would not struggle all my life—
I need a breathing time.
Pass on—I've sanctified these grounds
To friendship, love, and lore:
Ye cannot come within the bounds—
I've shut the garden door.

THE MAYING.

AN INVITATION.

I.

Fair May unveils her ruddy cheek,
And decks her brow with daisies,
And scatters blossoms as she goes
Through fields and forest mazes.

The fragrant hawthorn, white with bloom,
Fills all the uplands airy:
The grass is dry, the sky is clear—
Let's go a-Maying, Mary!

II.

I dearly love, in days like this,
When birds make music o'er us,
To roam with thee through wildwood paths,
And listen to their chorus;
To help thee over crags and stiles,
And take thy hand in leaping,
And out and in to see thy face
Through leaves and branches peeping.

III.

Ten years have pass'd since first I saw
Thy fresh and budding beauty;
And love has ripen'd with the years,
And link'd itself with duty.
In life's young spring I swore to thee
A truth that should not vary;
And now, in summer of my days,
I love thee better, Mary!

IV.

Time lays his finger light on thee;
Thy cheeks are red as peaches;
Thine eyes are bright as first they glowed
To hear my youthful speeches.

Thine eldest boy is nine years old,
Thy youngest babe two summers;
And thou art blooming like a girl,
'Mid all the little comers.

V.

Bring all the four into the woods—
We 'll set them gathering posies
Of harebells blue and pimpernels,
Instead of garden roses.
Beneath the trees we 'll have one day
Of frolicsome employment;
And birds shall sing and winds shall blow,
To help us to enjoyment.

VI.

Leave house affairs to shift awhile—
Leave work, and care, and sorrow:
We'll be the merrier to-day,
And happier to-morrow.
I would not greatly care for life,
If fate and toil contrary
Could not afford me, now and then,
A holiday for Mary.

VII.

And Fate *is* kind to those who strive
To make existence pleasant,
With harmless joys and simple tastes,
And kindness ever present.

We'll not complain; so come away,
And when we want a treasure,
We'll use these May-day memories
To buy forgotten pleasure.

THE MAN AND THE ATOM.

"Small atom, unconsidered,
Unfelt, and scarcely seen!
Thou hast no worth
Upon the earth;—
So infinitely mean.

"Useless thou art, O atom!
And absolute in might,
If I decree
Thou shalt not be,
I can destroy thee quite."

"Ah, no; thy hand is powerless!
I hold a life too high,
A strength innate,
As old as fate,—
I change, but cannot die.

"Destruction cannot touch me;
The hand alone which wrought
My shape and thine,—
A hand divine,
Can hurl me into nought.

"Thou mayst on waters cast me,
Or loose me to the wind,
Or burn in fire,
At thy desire,
So that thou canst not find;

"But I shall hold existence
To Earth's remotest time,
And fill in space
My destined place,
Though humble, yet sublime.

"Vain man! ere yet thy father
Drew nurture from the breast;
Ere yet the field,
Thy grandsires tilled,
By human foot was pressed;

"Ere yet the mighty empire,
Of which thou'rt citizen,
Was slowly wrought,
By strength of Thought,
To be a hive of men;

"Ere yet the savage wandered
Where now thy cities stand;
Ere foxes prowled,
Or wild wolves howled,
In forests of thy land;

"Ere yet the deeds of heroes
By Homer's tongue was told;
Ere Troy was built,
Or blood was spilt,
By mythic men of old;

"Ere yet the ancient peoples,
Whose very names have died,
Built towns on rocks,
Or fed their flocks
Upon Euphrates' side;

"Ere yet great Nimrod hunted
In insolence of power,
Or raised in vain,
On Babel's plain,
His Heaven-defying tower;

"Ere yet the Ark was floated,
Or Heaven-born giants trod,
With mortal maids,
Through greenwood shades,
To dare the wrath of God;

"Ere yet offending Adam
Fell from his pure estate;
Or tended flowers,
In Eden's bowers,
With Eve, his happy mate;

"*I*, even *I* existed;
And played my proper part
In God's great plan;—
Oh, little man,
Reflect on what thou art!

"Couldst thou destroy my being,
Thy hand might reach the spheres,
And bid the sun
No longer run
His course among his peers.

"Be humble, brother atom;
Whate'er thy mortal growth,
Or mine may be,
Humility
Alone becomes us both."

REMEMBRANCES OF NATURE.

I REMEMBER the time, thou roaring sea,
When thy voice was the voice of Infinity—
A joy, and a dread, and a mystery.

I remember the time, ye young May flowers,
When your odours and hues in the fields and bow
Fell on my soul, as on grass the showers.

I remember the time, thou blustering wind,
When thy voice in the woods, to my youthful mind,
Seem'd the sigh of the Earth for human kind.

I remember the time, ye suns and stars,
When ye raised my soul from its mortal bars,
And bore it through heav'n on your golden cars.

And has it then vanished, that happy time?
Are the winds, and the seas, and the stars sublime,
Deaf to thy soul in its manly prime?

Ah, no! ah, no! amid sorrow and pain,
When the world and its facts oppress my brain,
In the world of spirit I rove—I reign.

I feel a deep and a pure delight
In the luxuries of sound and sight—
In the opening day, in the closing night.

The voices of youth go with me still,
Through the field and the wood, o'er the plain and the hill—
In the roar of the sea, in the laugh of the rill.

Every flower is a lover of mine,
Every star is a friend divine:
For me *they blossom*, for me they shine.

To give me joy, the oceans roll,
They breathe their secrets to my soul:
With me they sing, with me condole.

Man cannot harm me if he would;
I have such friends for my every mood,
In the overflowing solitude.

Fate cannot touch me: nothing can stir
To put disunion or hate of her
'Twixt Nature and her worshipper.

Sing to me, flowers; preach to me, skies:
Ye landscapes, glitter in mine eyes;
Whisper, ye deeps, your mysteries.

Sigh to me, winds; ye forests, nod:
Speak to me ever, thou flowery sod:
Ye are mine—all mine—in the peace of God.

A DEFIANCE.

Thou shalt not rob me, thievish Time,
Of all my blessings, all my joy;
I have some jewels in my heart,
Which thou art powerless to destroy.

Thou mayst denude mine arm of strength,
And leave my temples seamed and bare;
Deprive mine eyes of passion's light,
And scatter silver o'er my hair;

But never, while a book remains,
And breathes a woman or a child,
Shalt thou deprive me, whilst I live,
Of feelings fresh and undefiled.

No, never while the Earth is fair,
And reason keeps its dial bright,
Whate'er thy robberies, O Time,
Shall I be bankrupt of delight.

Whate'er thy victories on my frame;
Thou canst not cheat me of this truth—
That though the limbs may faint and fail,
The spirit can renew its youth.

So, thievish Time, I fear thee not;—
Thou'rt powerless on this heart of mine.
My precious jewels are my own,
'T is but the settings that are thine.

ALTERNATION.

ADVICE TO A HARD STUDENT.

I.

Day follows Night; the spring-time buds
Are born of winter snow,
And for the sake of summer leaves
The March Nor'-easters blow.
December weaves the robe of May,
And June's young blossoms drop,
That Amalthea's horn may gleam
With ripeness to the top.

II.

Did Night for ever show her stars,
Or Noonday ever shine;
Were orchards in perpetual fruit,
What loss were thine and mine?
All blessings, beauties, and delights
From Alternation rise;
And constant Nature lives in change
Beneficently wise.

III.

Then vary thy incessant task,
Nor plod each weary day,
As if thy life were thing of earth—
A servant to its clay.

Alternate with thine honest work
Some contemplations high:
Though toil be just, though gold be good,
Look upward to the sky.

IV.

Take pleasure for thy limbs at morn;
At noontide wield the pen;
Converse to-night with moon and stars;
To-morrow talk with men.
Cull garlands in the fields and bowers,
Or toy with running brooks;
Then rifle in thy chamber lone
The honey of thy books.

V.

If in the wrestlings of the mind
A gladiator strong,
Give scope and freedom to thy thought,—
But strive not over-long.
Climb to the mountain-top serene,
And let life's surges beat,
With all their whirl of striving men,
Far, far beneath thy feet.

VI.

But stay not ever on the height,
'Mid intellectual snow;
Come down betimes to tread the grass,
And roam where waters flow;

Come down betimes to rub thy hands
At the domestic hearth;
Come down to share the warmth of love,
And join the children's mirth.

VII.

If thou wouldst read in Wisdom's book,
Do justice to thy mind,
Nor fix thy gaze upon the sun,
For fear of growing blind.
Though Wisdom haunt the solitude,
Green wood, or moorland brown,
Yet there is Wisdom wise as she
In highways of the town.

VIII.

Let love of books, and love of fields,
And love of men combine
To feed in turns thy mental life,
And fan its flame divine;
Let outer frame, and inner soul,
Maintain a balance true,
Till every string on Being's lyre
Give forth its music due.

IX.

Keep time with Nature; sow or reap
Obedient to her call;
Nor for one season's flower or fruit
Renounce the wealth of all.

Wise Alternation rules the world,
As *now* succeeds to *then:*
So shall thy life adjust its powers,
And thou be man of men.

THE SPIRIT OF THE BLUE-BELL.

(SUGGESTED BY THE BEAUTIFUL BASSO-RELIEVO BY R. WESTMACOTT, A.R.A.

I.

WHEN youthful June strews earth with flowers,
And birds make musical the bowers;
When sound with sight appears to vie,
Which best shall charm us, earth or sky—
I love, sweet blossom of the wild,
Young summer's azure-vested child,
To see thee hang thy tender bells
In meadow slopes or forest dells.

II.

'Mid feathery fern or spear-like grass,
Thou noddest to me as I pass;
And, memory's playmate as thou art,
Awakenest fancies of the heart,
Entwined with rural life and joy,
That please the man and charmed the boy;
And send me back, through clouds of years,
To childhood's blushes, smiles, and tears.

III.

I tread the forest solitude,
Thou modest sapphire of the wood,—
And Solitude, no longer lone,
Is filled with visions all thine own:
With thoughts and dreams, each linked with thee
By some soft spell of memory,
Sweet to recall, and dear to hold—
My recollection's minted gold.

IV.

I live my early life anew;
I tread, well pleased, the morning dew;
With childish voice I trill my rhyme,—
With tiny feet the stiles I climb,—
With little eyes that never tire,
I watch, examine, and admire;
And gather garlands as I run,
Or sit and weave them in the sun.

V.

Anon by running brooks I lie,
To watch the white clouds sailing by;
Or, dazzled by the noontide beam,
I cast thy blossoms in the stream,
With curious gaze resolved to note
Their small mischances as they float—
Deciding, with a judgment proud,
Which sails the faster, flower or cloud.

VI.

And other visions come at call—
The lover's walk at evening's fall;
The posy culled with pleasing care,
To grace a bosom fond and fair;
The seat beneath the apple-tree,
Or mid high clover on the lea;
All the bright foolishness of youth,
When earth was heaven and man was truth.

VII.

These are thy gifts and liberal dower,
Gem of the wilds, ethereal flower;
I would not lose my love of thee,
For all the pomps of luxury;
Nor of thy sisters of the woods,
Companions of my varying moods;
All sweetly garrulous as thou,
Of past delights made present now.

VIII.

Yet, mighty Art, to Nature true,
Can clothe thy form with beauty new.
Lo! by the artist's powerful spells,
Amid thy leaves a spirit dwells—
A spirit with a gentle face,
Imbued with melancholy grace,
And downcast eyes that seem to say,
"*I love—I meditate*—I pray."

Was no creation—she was *ther*
Thou didst but see with keener
What blind materialists deny.
A living spirit breathes in all,
To teach, enrapture, and enthr
Each tree that waves, each flow
Speaks high and spiritual thing

X.

And once by chisel, brush, or p
Evoked before the eyes of men.
No future spell can disenchant,
The floweret or its habitant:
The beauteous visions breathe
Like creatures of our daily love
And, linked with sympathies r
Become immortal as the mind.

THE NAMELESS MOUNTAIN STREAM P. 92.

I've traced thy course, thou gentle brook:—
I've seen thy life in all thy moods;
I've seen thee lingering in the nook
Of the shady, fragrant, pine-tree woods;
I've seen thee starting and leaping down
The smooth high rocks and boulders brown;
I've tracked thee upwards, upwards still,
From the spot where the lonely birch-tree stands,
Low adown amid shingle and sands,
Over the brow of the ferny hill,
Over the moorland, purple dyed,
Over the rifts of granite grey,
Up to thy source on the mountain side,
Far away—oh, far away.

II.

Beautiful stream! By rock and dell,
There's not an inch in all thy course
I have not tracked. I know thee well;
I know where blossoms the yellow gorse,
I know where waves the pale blue-bell,
And where the hidden violets dwell.
I know where the foxglove rears its head,
And where the heather tufts are spread;
I know where the meadow-sweets exhale,
And the white valerians load the gale.
I know the spot the bees love best,
And *where the linnet* has built her nest.

I know the bushes the grouse frequent,
And the nooks where the shy deer browse the bent.
I know each tree to thy fountain head—
The lady-birches, slim and fair:
The feathery larch, the rowans red,
The brambles trailing their tangled hair.
And each is linked to my waking thought
By some remembrance fancy-fraught.

III.

I know the pools where the trout are found,
The happy trout, untouched by me.
I know the basins, smooth and round,
Worn by thy ceaseless industry,
Out of the hard and stubborn stone—
Fair clear basins where nymphs might float:
And where in the noon-time all alone
The brisk bold robin cleans his coat.
I know thy voice: I've heard thee sing
Many a soft and plaintive tune,
Like a lover's song in life's young spring,
Or Endymion's to the moon.
I've heard it deepen to a roar
When thou wert swollen by Autumn rains,
And rushed from the hill-tops to the plains,
A loud and passionate orator.
I've spoken to thee—and thou to me—
At morn, or noon, or closing night:

And ever the voice of thy minstrelsy
Has been companion of delight.

IV.

Yet, lovely stream, unknown to fame,
Thou hast oozed, and flowed, and leaped, and run,
Ever since Time its course begun,
Without a record, without a name.
I asked the shepherd on the hill—
He knew thee but as a common rill;
I asked the farmer's blue-eyed daughter—
She knew thee but as a running water;
I asked the boatman, on the shore,
He was never asked to tell before—
Thou wert a brook, and nothing more.

V.

Yet, stream, so dear to me alone,
I prize and cherish thee none the less
That thou flowest unseen, unpraised, unknown,
In the unfrequented wilderness.
Though none admire and lay to heart
How good and beautiful thou art,
Thy flow'rets bloom, thy waters run,
And the free birds chant thy benizon.
Beauty is beauty, though unseen;
And those who live it all their days,
Find meet reward in their soul serene,
And the inner voice of prayer and praise.

VI.

Like thee, fair streamlet, undefiled,
Many a human virtue dwells,
Unknown of men, in the distant dells,
Or hides in the coverts of the wild.
Many a mind of richest worth,
Whether of high or of low estate,
Illumes the by-ways of the earth,
Unseen, but good; unknown, but great.
Many a happy and lovely soul
Lives beauty in the fields afar,
Or, 'mid the city's human shoal,
Shines like a solitary star.

A FANCY UNDER THE TREES.

I.

Ye happy, happy trees,
That in perpetual ease
Stand on the soil where ye as saplings grew:
That lift your branches fair
To the embracing air,
And feed on sunshine, rain, and morning dew:
I would that I could lead,
In all my thought and deed,
A life, ye happy trees, as beautiful as you.

II.

To build your fabric high
No breathing creatures die:
ɔur bursting buds that open to the spring
Require no food from death;
Your leaves that woo the breath
f the sweet summer, and your boughs that swing
To breezes over head,
Demand no life-blood shed,
: tribute of a pain from meanest living thing.

III.

In cloud-caressing length,
In beauty and in strength,
ɜ live and grow, ye people of the woods.
Not idly do we deem,
In waking fancy's dream,
ıat in your green and busy solitudes
Ye may, to men unknown,
Have pleasures of your own,
ıd feel sweet sympathies with all dear Nature's moods.

IV.

To everything that lives
The kind Creator gives
ıare of enjoyment; and, while musing here,
Amid the high grass laid,
Under your grateful shade,
leem *your branches* rustling low and clear

May have some means of speech,
Lovingly, each to each,
Some power to understand, to wonder, to revere.

V.

I deem that all your leaves,
In morns, or noons, or eves,
Or in the starry stillness of the night,
May look to Heaven in prayer,
Or bend to earth, and share
Some joy of sense, some natural delight:
That root, and branch, and stem,
Partake the joy with them,
And feel through all their sap God's glory infinite.

VI.

I deem the song of birds
May speak to you in words,
And give you pleasure in your silent hours.
I deem that storm and hail,
The thunder and the gale,
The softly-dripping, health-restoring showers,
The sunlight and the dews,
May secretly infuse
Emotions of pure joy to all the groves and bowers.

VII.

I deem that all night long,
When hushed is every song,
And the cold frosty stars wink in the sky—

When the winds droop to rest
On Earth's forgiving breast—
That ye still wake, and hold communion high
With the o' er-arching spheres,
Disclosing to your ears
The truths in fables told of heavenly harmony.

VIII.

I deem, when winter cold
Howls o 'er the brittle wold,
And all your boughs rock naked to and fro,
That unto you is given,
By ever-watchful Heaven,
Strength to endure, and solace under woe;
That *He* who rules the wind
Tempers its wrath unkind,
And guards your lives, as ours, when bitter tempests blow.

IX.

I deem ye speak aloud
To the careering cloud;
And that your deep-toned hymns, to fervour wrought,
When dark December roars,
Voiced like the billowy shores,
Is the expression of religious thought;
And that, with distant waves,
Ye chant harmonious staves—
A psalmody sublime, with adoration fraught.

X.

O happy, happy trees!
Ye make no enemies:
All things that live and know you are your friends.
Enjoying and enjoyed,
Your harmless lives are void
Of all the Sorrow that on ours attends.
Your day is long and fair,
Your life is sweet to bear,
And Nature has decreed no suffering when it ends.

XI.

Ends—when restored to earth?
Perchance.—If constant birth
Springs but from constant changing and decay,
The life that moved your sap
May live again, mayhap,
And bear new beauties to the gaze of day.
Oh, mystery of Death!
Unspoken of our breath;
We feel, but know thee not—we can but hope and pray.

THE SEVEN ANGELS OF THE LYRE.

I.

KNOWEST thou not the wondrous lyre?
Its strings extend from earth to heaven,
And ever more the angels seven,
With glowing fingers tipped in fire,
Draw from the chords celestial tones,
That peal in harmonies through all the starry zones.

II.

An angel with a pensive face
Sits at the key-note evermore;
Not sad, as if a pang she bore,
But radiant with supernal grace:—
Her name is SORROW; when she sings
The wondrous Lyre responds in all its golden strings.

III.

The second breathes in harmonies;—
A rainbow is her diadem,
And on her breast she wears a gem
That trickled from Contrition's eyes:—
Her name is SYMPATHY; her tears
Falling upon the Lyre make music in the spheres.

IV.

The third is beautiful as she;
Unfading flowers her brow adorn,
And from her smile a ray is born
That looks into Eternity:—

Her name is HOPE; to hear her voice
Belted Orion sings, and all the stars rejoice.

V.

The fourth with eyes of earnest ken,
Surveys the boundless universe,
While her ecstatic lips rehearse
The promises of God to men:—
Her name is FAITH; her mighty chord
Reverberates through space the glories of the Lord

VI.

The fifth is robed in spotless white,
And from the beating of her heart,
Such heavenly corruscations start
As clothe the universe with light:—
Her name is LOVE: when she preludes
The constellations throb in all their multitudes.

VII.

The sixth inhales perpetual Morn:
Far through the bright Infinitude
She sees beyond the present Good,
The Better destined to be born:—
Her name is ASPIRATION; ever
She sings the might of WILL, the beauty of ENDEAVOUR.

VIII.

Crown and completion of the seven
Rapt ADORATION sits alone;

She wakes the Lyre's divinest tone—
It touches Earth—it dwells in heaven.
All life and nature join her hymn;
Man and the rolling worlds and choirs of cherubim.

IX.

Know'st thou that lyre? If through thy soul
Th' immortal music never ran,
Thou art but outwardly a man;—
Thou art not pure—thou art not whole—
A faculty within thee sleeps
Death-like, ensepultured, in dim, unfathomed deeps.

X.

Immortal spirit, hear and soar!
The angels wave their golden wings,
And strike the seven celestial strings,
To give thee joy for evermore:—
Mount upward, lark-like from the sod;
And join, thou happy soul, the harmonies of God!

A PLEA FOR OUR PHYSICAL LIFE.

I.

WHY should we ever toil,
In silence or turmoil,
To gather gold like Californian slaves?
Why should we still debate,
In melancholy state,
Knowledge abstruse to lead us to our graves?

Or dream majestic dreams,
Filling the earth with schemes
Of human happiness from our Utopian shelves—
World-wide! alas—but far too narrow for ourselves?

II.

Let us be young again,
And o'er the grassy plain
Gambol like children, and give Care the slip,
Forgetful of distress
And mental stateliness:
Let us be young in spirit, as we trip
Beside the running brooks,
Heedless of men and books,
And heart-sore Wisdom's frowns or magisterial sighs,
Looking contemptuous down upon our revelries.

III.

Have we outgrown the joys
That filled our hearts as boys?
And does the music of the thrushes bring
No more the young delight,
That in our childhood bright
Made beautiful the mornings of the spring?
Ripple the streams no more,
As in the days of yore?
Or are our ears so dulled by commerce with our kind,
That we can hear no hymns between the trees and wind?

IV.

In our too plodding homes
We ponder over tomes,
Ledger and day-book, till we quite forget
That there are fields and bowers,
And river-banks and flowers,
And that we owe our languid limbs a debt:
A debt most sweet to pay—
A needful holiday—
A brain-refreshing truce, 'mid intellectual strife,
That, fought too keenly out, impairs the mortal life.

V.

We do our nature wrong
Neglecting over long
The bodily joys that help to make us wise;
The ramble up the slope
Of the high mountain cope—
The long day's walk, the vigorous exercise,
The fresh, luxurious bath,
Far from the trodden path,
Or 'mid the ocean waves dashing with harmless roar,
Lifting us off our feet upon the sandy shore.

VI.

Kind Heaven! there is no end
Of pleasures as we wend
Our pilgrimage in life's undevious way,

If we but know the laws
Of the Eternal Cause,
And for His glory and our good obey.
But intellectual pride
Sets half these joys aside,
And our perennial care absorbs the soul so much,
That life burns cold and dim beneath its deadening touch.

VII.

What pleasures he hath missed
Who struggles to exist
Amid fictitious wants, and luxuries vain;
Spending his youth and prime
As if our comrade, Time,
Were but a servitor in Mammon's train:
And, waking up at last,
When threescore years have passed,
With stiff and palsied joints, and just enough of breath
To own how wrong he was, and pay his court to Death.

VIII.

Welcome, ye plump green meads,
Ye streams and sighing reeds!
Welcome, ye corn-fields, waving like a sea!
Welcome, the leafy bowers,
And children gathering flowers!
And farewell, for awhile, sage drudgery!

What, though we 're growing old,
Our blood is not yet cold :
Come with me to the fields, thou man of many ills,
And give thy limbs a chance among the daffodils !

IX.

Come with me to the woods,
And let their solitudes
Re-echo to our voices as we go.
Upon thy weary brain
Let childhood come again,
Spite of thy wealth, thy learning, or thy woe !
Stretch forth thy limbs, and leap—
Thy life has been asleep ;
And though the wrinkles deep may furrow thy pale brow,
Show me, if thou art wise, how like a child art thou !

THE IVY IN THE DUNGEON.

I.

The ivy in a dungeon grew
Unfed by rain, uncheered by dew ;
Its pallid leaflets only drank
Cave-moistures foul, and odours dank.

II.

But through the dungeon-grating high
There fell a sunbeam from the sky;
It slept upon the grateful floor
In silent gladness evermore.

III.

The ivy felt a tremor shoot
Through all its fibres to the root:
It felt the light, it saw the ray,
It strove to blossom into day.

IV.

It grew, it crept, it pushed, it clomb—
Long had the darkness been its home;
But well it knew, though veiled in night,
The goodness and the joy of light.

V.

Its clinging roots grew deep and strong;
Its stem expanded firm and long;
And in the currents of the air
Its tender branches flourished fair.

VI.

It reached the beam—it thrilled—it curled—
It blessed the warmth that cheers the world;
It rose towards the dungeon bars—
It looked upon the sun and stars.

VII.

It felt the life of bursting Spring,
It heard the happy sky-lark sing.
It caught the breath of morns and eves,
And wooed the swallow to its leaves.

VIII.

By rains, and dews, and sunshine fed
Over the outer wall it spread;
And in the daybeam waving free,
It grew into a steadfast tree.

IX.

Upon that solitary place
Its verdure threw adorning grace.
The mating birds became its guests,
And sang its praises from their nests.

X.

Wouldst thou know the moral of the rhyme?
Behold the heavenly light! and climb.
To every dungeon comes a ray
Of God's interminable day.

UNDER THE HOLLY BOUGH.

A SONG FOR CHRISTMAS.

I.

Ye who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast fading year;

Ye who, by word or deed,
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come gather here.
Let sinned against, and sinning,
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now—
Be links no longer broken ;—
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the Holly Bough.

II.

Ye who have loved each other,
Sister and friend and brother,
In this fast fading year :
Mother and sire and child,
Young man and maiden mild,
Come gather here ;
And let your hearts grow fonder,
As memory shall ponder
Each past unbroken vow.
Old loves and younger wooing
Are sweet in the renewing,
Under the Holly Bough.

III.

Ye who have nourished sadness,
Estranged from hope and gladness,
In this fast fading year :

Ye with o'erburdened mind,
Made aliens from your kind,
Come gather here.
Let not the useless sorrow
Pursue you night and morrow.
If e'er you hoped, hope now—
Take heart;—uncloud your faces,
And join in our embraces
Under the Holly Bough.

INO NURSING BACCHUS.

SUGGESTED BY THE GROUP IN MARBLE EXECUTED BY J. H. FOLEY.

Ino lay toying with her sister's child;
The rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, and lusty-limbed,
But motherless babe of wretched Semele.
Beautiful Ino! 'mid the leaves she lay—
The vine-leaves and the luscious bursting grapes
Gathered in Cos. About the babe she twined
Her round delicious arm; her bright eyes shone
With a deep earnestness of happy love;
Her calm face breathed serenity of soul;
The white convolvulus in her dark hair
Was not more pure and guileless than the maid
Who nursed the infant Bacchus, for the sake
Of Hope *and Love*, and hapless Semele.

Daily she watched him with a mother's care;
Daily he lay upon her spotless breast;
Daily she fed him with the grapes of Cos,
With rye-bread, softened in Bœotian cream,
And figs and honey from Hymettus' hill.
Daily she saw his spirit from his eyes
Beam on the world with new intelligence.
A sister's and a mother's love combined
Centred in him,—as yet no other love
Warmer than this had ever stirred her soul.

"My lovely Bacchus, my sweet boy," she said,
"Ne'er hast thou known, unhappy that thou art,
The joy of sleeping at thy mother's breast.
Ne'er did thy red lips from her bosom draw
The stream of life; ne'er did thine eyes behold
The brighter eyes of my sweet Semele,
Victim of Hera's jealousy and guile,
Slain by the majesty, too bright to bear,
Of her adoring Zeus—king of heaven,
Who would have given his kingdom to have spared
Those loving but presumptuous eyes the sight
Of that destructive glory, whose full blaze
No mortal ever could behold and live.
But I will love thee, Bacchus, well as she;
And for my sister's sake, my sister's child,
Shall be my love till larger love shall come,
And link my spirit to a wider world.

"Behold the grape-bunch I have plucked for thee!
Sparkle, ye earnest eyes! Quiver ye lips—
Ye rosy, ripe, red lips! Stretch forth to clutch it,
Ye chubby fingers! Glow thou little frame
With new desire! See how the berries hang
To tempt thee, Bacchus. Wilt thou grasp them, boy?
Aye, so thou shalt, my little ruddy-cheeks!
The heavy close-wedged bunches, filled with juice,
Delight thee ever. Thou hast played with grapes,
And stained thy lips and fingers with their blood,
Ever with growing joy, since thou could smile.
Lo! they are ripe, and fresh, and bathed in bloom,
Almost as lovely as thy longing lips.
Aye! seize them—hold them—press them to thy mouth,
And dye with purple the sharp pearls within!

"Bacchus, dear Bacchus, I have dreams of thee.
Thy father Zeus shows me in my sleep
Thy future glories. I can prophesy
All thy renown, and prowess, and good deeds,
Sweet boy! predestined to immortal youth!
Thou wilt remember Ino's words to thee,
When the full majesty of man or god
Shall sit upon thy forehead, as the sun
Sits on the noon-day sky and reigns alone.
My treasured words shall be thine oracles,
And aid the prophecy they utter now.

"More grapes! and wouldst thou wrest them fro
the bunch?
Thou shalt not have them ere thou kissest me—
Thy lips are ready? Come then, put thine arms,
Pulpy, and warm, and loving, round my neck.
Thy kisses have no mixture of distrust;
They are all hope and faith, and childish love.
Here, take this bunch, sweet Bacchus, baby-god,
That shall one day, by favour of thy sire—
Thy glorious but most terrible sire—achieve
Greatness unparalleled by mortal men.

"Last night, sweet boy, I had a dream of thee.
I saw thee standing at the brazen wall
Of dreadful Tartarus. Thy looks were sad,
But earnest and majestic. Thou wert grown
To the full stature of the demi-god,
And all thy father sparkled in thine eyes.
Thy garments rustled with the fiery drops
Of moisture from the waves of Phlegethon,
Which thou hadst braved with all its tide of flame.
Thou stood'st, unharmed and resolutely strong,
Beside the adamantine columns tall
Of Hell's great portal. Wide the brazen gate
Swung open to admit thee; while I saw
Thy stedfast eyes through all that sombre place
Pour placid lustre, mellow as the moon's.
Nor Pluto nor Persephone arose

To chide the deed: fierce Cerberus but whined
From all his mouths—he could not bark at thee;
And the Eumenides sat still and scowled;
They could not harm thee—thou wert strong as they.—
Thine errand was of Heaven; and Hell itself,
Even while it glowed with hate, applauded thee.
Thy hapless mother, suffering for her sin,
Saw thee and wept. She flew into thine arms:
She knew that mighty Zeus loved her still,
And that he mourned the melancholy day
When he had slain her with the glorious blaze
Of his too bright and fierce divinity;—
That sent by Him thou camest through the gloom,
Braving the awful deity of Hell,
To lift her thence, and bear her up to Heaven,
Where, in the presence of the eternal gods,
Herself divine, she might endure and share
The splendour of his presence, and become
Herself a goddess to the world below.—
Thou 'lt do this deed; Bacchus! I know thou wilt.
"More grapes! thou little rifler? Well, they 're thine—
Thou thrivest on them. I have other dreams;
All sent by Zeus to my sleeping brain;
All full of future truths, my baby boy,
And all of thee. It was but yesternight,
Thou by my side, that I was lifted up

Into a heaven of thought, and far away
Over a clearly spread futurity,
I saw thee sceptred, robed, and diademed—
I saw thee leading to an Eastern clime
A mighty army; following thy car
They came in multitudinous frantic throngs,
With shouts tumultuous and cries of joy—
Women and men confused; these armed with sword
And lance, and javelin, and bossy shield;
Those holding up the thyrsus and the lute
To grace or celebrate thy victories;
And with dishevelled hair, and quivering lips,
And flashing eyes, chanting triumphal songs.

"I saw thee on the plains of furthest Ind,
Revolving in full glory like the sun;
And all thy stars—kings and great potentates—
Showing a pallid light in dawn of thine.

"I saw thee teaching the barbaric lands
The wealth that industry can draw from earth.
Thy grandsire, Cadmus, gave the Greeks a boon;
But thou, my Bacchus, on these lands remote
Shalt pour more needful blessings; thou shalt show
The ignorant hind how best to till the soil,
When he shall dig, or plough, or sow, or reap:
How to exchange the corn, and milk, and skins,
And pastoral wealth, for amber, gold, and silk:
And how to plant, and tend, and press the vine,

And use for health, and strength, and length of da
The treasures of the rich full-blooded grape.

" And art thou weary, Bacchus, my sweet boy!
Doth sleep come o'er thee, while I talk and sing,
And feast mine eyes upon thy loveliness?
Sleep in this bosom, then, immortal babe.
Mine and not mine,—yet as beloved still
As if not Semele, but Ino bore
Thy budding beauty to delight the world."

SUMMER SHADES.

I.

UNDER the trees
Let me lie at ease;
To muse or slumber, wake or dream,
Lulled by the ripple of the stream;
By the buzzing of bees like a trumpet tune—
By the whisper of leaves to the wind of noon,
That scarcely stirs the upper boughs,
Or wafts a breath to feverish brows;—
By the clink that sounds amid the grass,
Like tempered steel on greaves of brass,
As the mail-clad grasshoppers chirp and pass.
Lulled by these murmurs, many in one,
A *refugee from* the sultry sun,

Beneath the trees I love to lie,
Heedless how the time goes by—
Heedless, thoughtless, happy ever,
Upon the greensward by the river.

II.

On the streamlet's mossy brink
The thrush and linnet bathe and drink;
There the tender violets grow,
And the water-lilies float and blow:
And the humble daisy-blossoms spread
Their snow-white petals tipped with red;
Into its breast the oak-tree drops
The abortive acorn-cups;
And the beaches scatter their loosened leaves—
Far adown the panting beeves
Cool the hoof, and switch the tail,
And gaze upon the waters pale
With mild eyes, grateful for the shade
By the o'er-arching verdure made;—
Over its breast the dragon-fly
Darts in silken brilliancy;
And a myriad happy living things
Sport their variegated wings;—
A little, but a lovely brook,
It flows through many a quiet nook;
A vein of life, a bounty given,
Refreshing Earth, reflecting Heaven.

III.

By the sultry day opprest,
Sweet are shadows, sweet is rest;
Shade, and rest, and cooling wind,
And half vacuity of mind—
Drowsy waking, watchful sleep;
And a feeling calm and deep,
That though the world may fret and moil,
And busy slaves in cities broil,
Their sweltering care affects not us,
Under the leaves luxurious.
Gold and power, though both be good,
Lose their charm in the fresh green-wood.
They cannot vie with ease and rest,
And cool winds on the water's breast;
And the floating shadows that go and come,
And the sweet monotonous drowsy hum,
That Nature's voices all express,
To woo us into happiness.

IV.

Peace in the spirit and the brain—
A sense of life unmixed with pain—
Give me these, O sultry Summer!
And to thy shades a frequent comer,
I 'll lie and dream on the wavy grass,
And let the pomp and pageant pass
Of the great world; nor waste one hour
Of life and duty in thy bower;

The fallow mind, like fallow field,
May after-crops of fulness yield;
And a wise Indolence may be
The mother of new Industry.
So Summer Shades your worth I tell,
And woo you oft and love you well.

ON LEARNING TO SWIM.

I.

EUREKA! and, Eureka!
I've found another joy—
And gone back twenty seasons
To be again a boy.
In gurgling brooks and rivers
My feet shall wade no more;
The deep sea smiles to woo me—
I'm weary of the shore.

II.

Eureka! I have conquered—
The simple feat is done!
I've gained a new dominion—
Another world is won!
New life, new strength, new pleasure,
The elements afford;
And docile waters float me,
Their master and their lord.

III.

Let none despise my triumph;
Great may his pleasures be
Who makes them out of trifles,
With thankful heart and free—
Who finds them strewed around him,
Where'er his footsteps tend,
By Nature ever bounteous,
Our Teacher and our Friend.

IV.

I feel, O brave Columbus,
A pleasure great as thine,
When, sailing heavy-hearted
Upon the western brine,
San Salvador in beauty
First broke upon thy sight,
And gave, for bygone anguish,
Repayment of delight.

V.

I feel the joy of Newton,
When to his dubious mind
The law of gravitation
Was suddenly defined.
Such joy Leverrier tasted,
When with his charts unfurled,
Exploring Heaven for Neptune,
He found the expected world.

VI.

Before the will undaunted,
All difficulties fly,
And Nature yields obedience,
If patience will but try.
I'll seek no more the shallows,
Or founder like a stone—
Eureka! I'm a swimmer!
The waters are mine own.

THE GARDEN SPIDER.

I.

Though feared by many, scorned by all,
Poor spider on my garden wall,
Accused as ugly, cruel, sly,
And seen with an averted eye:
Thou shalt not lack one friend to claim
Some merit for thy injured name,
If I have strength to right the wrong,
Or in men's memory lives my song.

II.

Men call thee ugly;—did they look
With closer eyes on Nature's book,
They might behold in seeing thee
A creature robed in brilliancy;

They might admire thy speckled back
Begemmed with purple, gold, and black;
Thy hundred eyes, with diamond rims;
Thy supple and resplendent limbs.

III.

They call thee cruel; but forget,
Although thy skilful trap be set
To capture the unwary prey,
That thou must eat as well as they.
No pampered appetites hast thou,
What kindly Nature's laws allow
Thou takest for thy daily food,
And kindly Nature owns it good.

IV.

Fie on us! we who hunt and kill,
Voracious, but unsated still;
Who ransack earth, and sea, and air,
And slay all creatures for our fare,
Complain of thee, whose instinct leads,
Unerring, to supply thy needs,
Because thou takest now and then
A fly, thy mutton, to thy den.

V.

And then we call thee sly, forsooth,
As if from earliest dawn of youth
We did not lay our artful snares
For rabbits, woodcocks, larks, and hares,

Or lurk all day by running brooks
To capture fish with cruel hooks,
And with a patient, deep, deceit
Betray them with a counterfeit.

VI.

So let the thoughtless sneer or laugh ;
I 'll raise my voice in thy behalf.
The life thou livest, Nature meant—
It cannot be but innocent ;
She gave thee instinct to obey,
Her faultless hand designed thy prey ;
And if thou killest, well we know
'T is need, not sport, compels the blow.

VII.

And while I plead thy simple case
Against the slanderers of thy race,
And think thy skilful web alone
Might for some venial faults atone,
I will not pass unnoticed by
Thy patience in calamity,
Thy courage to endure or wait,
Thy self-reliance strong as fate.

VIII.

Should stormy wind, or thunder-shower
Assail thy web in evil hour ;
Should ruthless hand of lynx-eyed boy,
Or the prim gardener's rake destroy

The clever mathematic maze
Thou spreadest in our garden ways,
No vain repinings mar thy rest,
No idle sorrows fill thy breast.

IX.

Thou mayst perchance deplore thy lot,
Or sigh that fortune loves thee not;
But never dost thou sulk and mope,
Or lie and groan, forgetting hope;
Still with a patience, calm and true,
Thou workest all thy work anew,
As if thou felt that Heaven is just
To every creature of the dust,

X.

And that the Providence whose plan
Gives life to spiders as to man,
Will ne'er accord its aid divine
To those who lazily repine;
But that all strength to those is given
Who help themselves, and trust in Heaven.
Poor insect! to that faith I cling—
I learn thy lesson while I sing.

THE OLD YEAR'S REMONSTRANCE.

I.

The Old Year lay on his death-bed lone,
And ere he died he spoke to me,
Low and solemn in under tone,
Mournfully, reproachfully.
The fading eyes in his snow-white head
Shone bright the while their lids beneath.
These were the words the Old Year said—
I shall never forget them while I breathe:—

II.

"Did you not promise when I was born"—
Sadly he spoke, and not in ire—
"To treat me kindly—not to scorn—
And to pay the debts you owed my sire?
Did you not vow, with an earnest heart,
Your unconsidered hours to hive?
And to throw no day in waste away,
Of my three hundred sixty-five?

III.

"Did you not swear to your secret self,
Before my beard was a second old,
That whatever you'd done to my fathers gone,
You'd prize my minutes more than gold?
Did you not own, with a keen regret,
That the past was a time of waste and sin?
But that with me, untainted yet,
Wisdom and duty should begin?

IV.

"Did you not oft the vow renew
That never with me should folly dwell?
That, however Fate might deal with you,
You 'd prize me much, and use me well?
That never a deed of scorn or wrath,
Or thought unjust of your fellow-men,
Should, while I lived, obscure your path,
Or enter in your heart again?

V.

"Did you not fail?—but my tongue is weak
Your sad short-comings to recall."
And the Old Year sobbed—he could not speak—
He turned his thin face to the wall.
"Old Year! Old Year! I 've done you wrong—
Hear my repentance ere you die!
Linger awhile!" Ding-dong, ding-dong—
The joy-bells drowned his parting sigh.

VI.

"Old Year! Old Year!" he could not hear,
He yielded placidly his breath.
I loved him little while he was here,
I prized him dearly after death.
New Year! now smiling at my side,
Most bitterly the past I rue.
I 've learned a lesson since he died,
I 'll lead a better life with you.

THE NEW YEAR'S PROMISES.

I.

THE New Year came with a bounding step,
Jovial, lusty, full of glee;
While the brazen rhymes of the church-bell chimes,
Like an eager crowd exultingly,
Hurried along on the crisp cold air,
To herald his birth to thee and me.

II.

He stood beside us fair and young,
He laid his warm hand upon mine:
Our hearth glowed bright with a cheerful light,
And our eyes lit up with a keener shine,
As we raised a goblet brimming o'er,
And pledged him in the ripe red wine.

III.

I know not if the merry guests
Heard the words that I could hear:
If on that morn when he was born
They held communion with the Year:
But this I know, he spoke to me
In low sweet accents, silver clear:—

IV.

"My sire," quoth he, "is dead and gone;
He served thee ill or served thee well,

But only did as he was bid;
Thou wert the master of his spell;
He took his character from thee—
Most willing and most tractable.

V.

"Such is my promise; weigh its worth;
If thou 'lt be sad, I 'll help thee sigh;
If thou wilt play thy life away,
What friend shall aid thee more than I?
Whate'er the colour of thy mind,
I 'll wear it for my livery.

VI.

"If thou 'lt be busy, I will toil,
And aid the work that thou hast planned;
If thou wilt quaff, or jest, or laugh,
Mine hours shall waste at thy command;
If thou 'lt endeavour to be wise,
I 'll aid thy soul to understand.

VII.

"Do with me as thou wilt, good friend;
I 'll be thy slave in time to be,
But when I pass—whate'er I was—
I am the master over thee.
My father's ghost inspires my words;
Take heed!—*make* friends with Memory.

VIII.

"To-morrow and to-day I 'm thine,
But all my yesterdays mis-spent
Shall live as foes to thy repose,
And clog thy spirit's free ascent;
Pursue thee when thou know'st it not,
And haunt thee to thy detriment."

IX.

The New Year's face was calm and sad:
His words still floated through my brain:
When the guests around with joyous sound
Gave him a welcome once again:
"May he be better than the last!"
Was aye the burden of their strain.

X.

And the New Year's face grew bright as ours;
Friends, kinsmen, lovers, true and tried,
We formed the prayer that Heaven might spare
Our hearts to bless him when he died:
And thus we ushered the New Year in,—
And welcomed him to our fireside.

HE YOUNG MEN'S PETITION TO THEIR EMPLOYERS.

(WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE FRIENDS OF THE EARLY CLOSING MOVEMENT AT IPSWICH.)

I.

We form no vain capricious wish,
No idle words deliver,
The boon we want is small to grant,
A trifle to the giver;
But great to us as health and strength,
And sweet as virtuous pleasure—
A little time at evening chime,
An hour or two of leisure.

II.

We ask it not that we may throw
A burden on a neighbour,
Nor seek it coward-like to shirk
Our share of honest labour;
We feel and cherish the belief,
That were the gift accorded,
We 'd work with double energy,
And *earn it* ere afforded.

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Oh, no! we
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VI.

Grant, then, the boon—the gain to us
Will make you none the poorer;
Free service profits more than slave—
Its gratitude is surer.
The ten hours' toil of thankful hearts
Is better worth receiving,
Than toil of ten and five, enforced
Mid discontent and grieving.

VII.

That we may know the sympathies
Mid ceaseless toil denied us;
That we may taste the mental stores
Which books and men provide us;
That we may share the boundless wealth
Of intellectual pleasure—
Give us, we pray, at close of day,
An hour or two of leisure.

VIII.

So may your wealth, from year to year,
Increase like corn-fields growing:
So may your cup of mortal joy
Be full to overflowing;
So never may compunctious throb
Disturb your contemplation,
That you refused your fellow-men
The chance of Education.

THE PRAYER OF THE MAMMONITES.

Six days we give thee heart and brain;
In grief or pleasure, joy or pain,
Thou art our guide, O god of Gain!

And on the seventh, although we kneel
At other altars, and conceal,
For fashion's sake, the love we feel;

'Tis but our outward looks that pray;
Our inward thoughts are far away,
And give thee homage night and day.

Though often at a purer shrine
Our thoughts and actions disincline,
We're never hypocrites at thine.

Oh, no! we love thee far too well,
More than our words can ever tell,
With passion indestructible.

When thou art kind, all Earth is fair,
Men's eyes incessant homage glare,
Their tongues perennial flatteries bear.

But when thou frownest, all men frown;
We dwell among the stricken-down,
The scum and by-word of the town.

Though we are good, and wise, and true,
Deprived of thee, men look askew :
We have no merit in their view.

Though we have wit and eloquence,
The world denies us common sense,
If thou no golden shower dispense.

But mean, bad, stupid, all the three—
It matters not whate'er we be,
We have all Virtue, having thee.

Men hold us in their hearts enshrined,
To all our faults their eyes are blind,
We are the salt of humankind.

If we are old, they call us young ;
And if we speak with foolish tongue,
The praises of our wit are sung.

If we are ugly, gold can buy
Charms to adorn us in the eye
Of universal flattery.

If we are crooked, we grow straight—
If lame, we have Apollo's gait,
Seen in thy light, O Potentate !

Shine on us, Mammon, evermore—
Send us increase of golden store—
That we may worship and adore ;

And that by look, and voice, and pen
We may be glorified of men,
And praise thy name. Amen! Amen!

A VISIT TO BEDLAM.

I WALKED through Bedlam with an aching heart,
And gazing on its poor inhabitants
I learned a lesson of humility.
Some, vacant-eyed, full-faced, and blubber-lipped,
Sat on the ground, their chins upon their laps;
And cuddled with close arms their firm-set knees.
One grey-haired man paced slowly to and fro,
And squared his fists at the careering clouds;
And muttered to himself as if he talked
With grinning demons, whom he longed to strike,
Scowling upon him from the upper air.
Some wandered up and down with lazy gait,
And a perpetual smile upon their lips,
In ill accordance with their ashy eyes—
Dull as the embers of a faded fire.
Others, with restless march and flashing face,
Or a convulsive twitching of the jaws,
Counted their steps across the dreary yard,
Or held fierce converse with ideal foes.

One man, however, with a placid smile,
And words and gestures full of courtesy,
Begged me to listen to a scheme he had.
"I am," said he, "no madman, though I 'm here.
Survey me well:—do I look like a fool?
Is any idiotcy in these bright eyes?
I pray you listen. Are you good and kind,
And will you give or lend me sixpence, sir?
I thought you would, you are a gentleman.
Now, let me see. One penny for a quill,
One penny for some ink, and fourpence more
For paper; that makes sixpence, does it not?
You see that my arithmetic is right—
Best of all proofs of perfect sanity.
My greatest misery in this sad place
Is want of paper to write down my thoughts;
You have supplied my need—and with your gift
I shall not envy any man on earth.
Thank you, again! And now I will disclose
The plan I 've dreamed of to reform the world.
Like all great schemes it has but little in 't,—
So simple is it, that you 'll doubtless smile
At men's stupidity, who till this day
Never discovered it; though 't is as clear
As any theorem in Euclid's book.
It stares them in the face by night and day,
And yet they cannot see its aptitude

To cure all mortal evils. You 'll allow
That eating is the greatest curse of life,
The cause of death, the quintessence of sin?
Our mother Eve was cautioned not to eat;
Heaven's only law was, 'Eat thou not at all.'
But Eve was foolish, and the Devil sly;
He knew her weakness—steaks and mutton-chops
Sprang from that apple, as effect from cause!
She ate, and straightway sorrow, pain, and death,
Rushed like a torrent, and laid waste the world.

"Man wants no food. The rich and genial air
Is filled with all the nutriment he needs.
The abundant air—the abundant water pure,
Are quite sufficient for his health and strength;
All coarser food is but the source of death:
Were these alone his diet every day,
There would be, clearly, no more robberies;
No murders for the sake of paltry gold
(Gold, only precious for the sake of food),
No judges, juries, hangmen, barristers,
No proctors, no attornies, no police;
No toil would wear the flesh and bones of men,
At most unwholesome work for scanty pay;
And as for beggary, why, who would beg,
When the free air would yield him nourishment?
The beggar would be wealthy as a king,
The beggar's brat as happy as a bird

That sings its love-song in the light of morn.
Physicians, poison-mongers, all that tribe,
Might shut up shop; there would be no disease
To try the skill of "vile apothecaries."
'T is eating breeds all evil in our flesh,
Ill-feeling, jealousies, revenge, and hate,
Gout, apoplexy, palsy, fever, pest!
Oh, what a fair and heavenly world is spoiled,
By this coarse madness of unhappy men!"
"Are you quite sure," I said, "that you, yourself,
Could live on air? Your scheme, in theory,
Is quite complete—but how would practice work?"
"Most admirably well—it could not fail,"
He answered promptly, with a kindling eye.
"It might, perhaps, be difficult at first,
But if men earnestly desired reform,
Success would crown their efforts, soon or late.
The guilty and degraded man, who drinks
Too deep of alcohol, is slow to learn
The blessedness of water from the brook;
But he *can* learn it, if his will be strong.
So of this other vice;—there needs but time
To make men angels. Oh, benighted men!
Slaves of your bellies! helots of your teeth!"
"Ah, yes! the teeth," said I. "The teeth!" said he;
"I know your argument! I feel your sneer:

Teeth are for ornament, and not for use.
What is the use of hair upon the head,
Beard on the chin, or whiskers on the jaws?
Or the two nipples on the breasts of men?"
Lest further speech should weaken the effect
Of this last climax of his argument,
He shook me by the hand and went away,
His features glowing with benevolence,
And all his frame pervaded with his joy.

I sighed—and smiled—and then went wandering o
Musing upon this dreamer, till I heard
A sudden voice, as if a woman spake
In angry majesty and stern command.
I stopped and looked, and in a darksome cell,
Crouched in a corner on a heap of straw,
I saw a creature, at whose aspect bare
A freezing shudder ran through all my veins.
The large round head, unfeminine, was cropped,
And the short hair, like stubble in a field,
Stood perpendicular; her face was thin
And yellow-brown, her eyes were fiery bright,
And glared upon me with a fiendish scowl;
Her only garment was a long loose robe
Of coarse blue cloth, tied round her with a cord;
Her large-veined feet were bare upon the floor,
Her arms were naked to the shoulder-pits,
And in her hand she held a broken straw.

"Begone!" she said; "but if you will not go,
Come in respectfully; take off your shoes,
Go down upon your knees; do you not see
That you are treading on my tapestries?
Are you so blind that you are not aware
You stand in presence of the Queen of Grief?"
Rising before me as she spoke, I saw
A tall young woman, old in wretchedness
But not in years, with pale and skinny hands,
And face so full of tragic earnestness
It haunts me yet—a creature of the mind,
Familiar to me as a pain endured.
The keeper shut the door and locked her in.
"Our worst case," said the man; "a hopeless case
What made her mad I know not. She is calm
When no one looks at her. Left to herself,
She sings, and talks, and gives commands all day
To Dukes and Lords, gold-sticks and Chamberlains"
I looked no more, I had beheld enough
Of madness and of wretchedness; but still,
With deep humility and gratitude,
Whilst breathing to myself the people's prayer—
"God save my senses,"—I confessed with awe
The wondrous mercy governing the world.
Madness is horrible: but who shall tell
If madness be a misery to the mad?
The back is fitted for the load it bears,

And ev'n in madness, Fate's equivalents
May make amends for blessed reason lost.
The poor philosopher, brimful of schemes,
Blessed with a sixpence and a listener,
Was happier than I, that pitied him:
And the harsh hag, whose very sight made creep
The flesh upon my bones, had golden dreams
Of wealth, dominion, majesty and power.

Great is the doctrine of equivalents:
Mighty and universal is the law
Of Compensation.—If we lose we gain,
And if we gain, we lose. So rolls the world.
The hand of Justice holds th' eternal scale.
If we are happy in the world's esteem,
Perchance we have a secret sore within.
If great, we may behold a skeleton
Taking its place behind us at the board,
To give us warning what the end shall be:
If we are mean, we have a comforter
In the conviction, that we cannot fall
Beneath the lowest depth at which we lie.
If we are sane, we feel our sanity
In care, and sorrow, and perennial toil.
If we are mad, just Heaven looks pitying down,
And sends us dreams that shame realities.

YOU AND I.

I.

Who would scorn his humble fellow
For the coat he wears?
For the poverty he suffers?
For his daily cares?
Who would pass him in the footway
With averted eye?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

II.

Who, when vice or crime, repentant,
With a grief sincere
Asked for pardon, would refuse it—
More than Heaven severe?
Who to erring woman's sorrow
Would with taunts reply?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

III.

Who would say that all who differ
From his sect must be
Wicked sinners, heaven-rejected,
Sunk in Error's sea,

And consign them to perdition
With a holy sigh?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

IV.

Who would say that six days' cheating,
In the shop or mart,
Might be rubbed by Sunday praying
From the tainted heart,
If the Sunday face were solemn
And the credit high?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

V.

Who would say that Vice is Virtue
In a hall of state?
Or that rogues are not dishonest
If they dine off plate?
Who would say Success and Merit
Ne'er part company?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

VI.

Who would give a cause his efforts
When the cause was strong,
But desert it on its failure,
Whether right or wrong?

Ever siding with the upmost,
Letting downmost lie?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

VI.

Who would lend his arm to strengthen
Warfare with the right?
Who would give his pen to blacken
Freedom's page of light?
Who would lend his tongue to utter
Praise of tyranny?
Would you, brother? No—you would not.
If you would—not *I*.

"BOWING DOWN."

"THE WAY TO RISE IN LONDON."

I.

THERE came a lad to London town,
Bowing down, bowing down;
He had no principle nor pence,
But cunning, wit, and eloquence;
He longed for power, he longed for pelf,
He had a fond love for himself.
How were his ends to be achieved?
He looked around him and perceived,
That bowing down, bowing down,
Was the way to rise in London town.

II.

He lost no time in vain debate,
Bowing down, bowing down.
He clung to men of high estate,
He was a toady to the great;
He had a loud laugh in his poke,
Whene'er his patron made a joke:
A servile tongue, a fawning eye,
And a beautiful humility;
For bowing down, bowing down,
Was the way to rise in London town.

III.

And he could write as well as speak,
Bowing down, bowing down,
Whene'er there was a spite to wreak,
Or foe to crush in a critique;
A flaw or error to defend,
His pen was ready for his *friend;*
Though for these tasks, we may be sure,
He had no friends among the *poor;*
For bowing down, bowing down,
Was the way to rise in London town.

IV.

He was not proud—oh, not at all!
Bowing down, bowing down,
He 'd play the ready menial,
And fetch or carry, stand or fall;

He'd dance or sing, or preach or jest,
Or give his talk a ribald zest;
He felt no qualms could he but hit
His patron's humour or his wit;
For bowing down, bowing down,
Was the way to rise in London town.

V.

And not alone by word or pen,
Bowing down, bowing down,
Was he of use to powerful men;
He knew the hour, the where, the when,
To pander to each quiet vice—
He was too needy to be nice;
But what he did we need not tell,
Our silence shows it just as well;
For bowing down, bowing down,
Was the way to rise in London town.

VI.

He was successful in his aim,
Bowing down, bowing down,
Achieved position and a name,
And gathering gold to gild his fame,
Aspired to give the nation laws,
Quite certain of his own applause.
He found a borough to his mind,
His patron lord was more than kind:

For bowing down, bowing down,
Was the way to rise in London town.

VII.

And now a mighty man is he,
Bowing down, bowing down;
And for his own servility,
He 'd take revenge on thee and me.
His menials lead the life of slaves,
He thinks all human creatures knaves,
And those who need him blush to feel,
'T is vain to sue unless they kneel;
And that bowing down, bowing down,
Is the way to rise in London town.

VIII.

There is this lesson in his fate,
Bowing down, bowing down,
That all who know him scorn or hate,
And that, though rich, he 's desolate.
We will not hate him, will not scorn,
We 'll rather pity the forlorn,
And doubt the truth before our eyes,
Affirmed by all the worldly wise,
That bowing down, bowing down,
Is the way to rise in London town.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL LYING.

BUILD a lie—yes, build a lie,
A large one—be not over tender;
Give it a form, and raise it high,
That all the world may see its splendour;
Then launch it like a mighty ship
On the restless sea of men's opinion,
And the ship shall sail before the gale
Endued with motion and dominion.

Though storms may batter it evermore,
Though angry lightnings flash around it,
Though whirlwinds rave, and whirlpools roar,
To overwhelm and to confound it,
The ship shall ride, all wrath of time
And hostile elements defying:
The winds of Truth are doubtless strong,
But great's the buoyancy of lying.

And though the ship grow old at last,
Leaky, and water-logged, and crazy,
Yet still the hulk endures the blast,
And fears no weather, rough or hazy;
For should she sink, she'll rise again,
No strength her rotten planks shall sever:
Give her but size, and the worst of lies
May float about the world for ever.

THE POOR MAN'S RICHES.

I.

Poor! did you call me?
My wants are but few,
And generous Nature
Gives more than my due;
The air and the sunshine,
Fresh water and health,
And heart to enjoy them—
All these are my wealth.

II.

No close-handed miser,
That e'er had a hoard,
Could reckon such treasure
As I can afford:
The wood in its verdure,
The stream in its flow,
Are mine in their beauty
Wherever I go.

III.

My wealth is substantial,
Although in the mart
I cannot convey it,
In whole or in part;

THE POOR MAN'S RICHES. P. 150.

Yet, if I enjoy it,
What signifies more?
I 'm lord of the ocean;
I 'm king of the shore.

IV.

Wealth could procure me
But pleasure and ease:
I 've both in my garden
Beneath the green trees;
I 've both in my cottage,
My fancies to feed;
I 've both in my conscience,—
What more do I need?

V.

The joys that delight me
Are free as my thought;
They 're common as sunshine—
They cannot be bought.
I 've servants and minstrels,
And boundless domains;
I 've rivers and mountains,
And forests and plains.

VI.

The robin's my minstrel,
My friend, and my ward;
The lark is my poet,
The thrush is my bard.

No great prima donna,
The pride of her hour,
Can yield me more music
Than birds in the bower.

VII.

The rich and the mighty
Have chaplains in pay;
And I, too, have chaplains
As pious as they,—
Who preach to my spirit
As with them I bend
To God the Creator,
My Father and Friend.

VIII.

In whispering foliage
They soothe and persuade;
They sing in the sunlight,
They talk in the shade:
I hear them in tempests,
I see them in cloud—
In the voice of the thunder
They reason aloud.

IX.

Though gold has its friendships
That cling to it well,
Acquaintance and lovers
Too many to tell;

Yet I, too, by myriads,
Have friends of my own,
Who pay me sweet visits
When I am alone.

X.

All saints and apostles,
All prophets divine,
All sages and poets,
Are teachers of mine,—
My friends and my teachers
Wherever I roam,
The guides of my spirit,
The lights of my home.

XI.

And, crown of all riches,
Far better than pelf,
I 've a true heart who loves me
For sake of myself.
With these and my patience,
And strength to endure,
My health, and my honour,
How can I be poor?

MACLAINE'S CHILD,

A LEGEND OF LOCHBUY, MULL.

"MACLAINE, you 've scourged me like a hound;
You should have struck me to the ground,
You should have played a chieftain's part—
You should have stabbed me to the heart.

"You should have crushed me into death:
But here I swear with living breath,
That for this wrong which you have done,
I 'll wreak my vengeance on your son—

"On him, and you, and all your race!"
He said, and bounding from his place,
He seized the child with sudden hold—
A smiling infant three years old.

And, starting like a hunted stag,
He scaled the rock, he clomb the crag,
And reached o'er many a wide abyss
The beetling seaward precipice.

And, leaning o'er its topmost ledge,
He held the infant o'er the edge.
"In vain thy wrath, thy sorrow vain,
No hand shall save it, proud Maclaine."

With flashing eye and burning brow
The mother followed, heedless how,
O'er crags with mosses overgrown,
And stair-like juts of slippery stone;

But midway up the rugged steep,
She found a chasm she could not leap,
And, kneeling on its brink, she raised
Her supplicating hands, and gazed.

"Oh, spare my child, my joy, my pride;
Oh, give me back my child!" she cried;
"My child! my child!" with sobs and tears,
She shrieked upon his callous ears.

"Come, Evan," said the trembling chief,
His bosom wrung with pride and grief,
"Restore the boy, give back my son,
And I 'll forgive the wrong you 've done."

"I scorn forgiveness, haughty man!
You 've injured me before the clan,
And nought but blood shall wipe away
The shame I have endured to-day."

And as he spoke he raised the child,
To dash it 'mid the breakers wild,
But at the mother's piercing cry
Drew back a step, and made reply:

"Fair lady, if your lord will strip,
And let a clansman wield the whip,
Till skin shall flay and blood shall run,
I 'll give you back your little son."

The lady's cheeks grew pale with ire,
The chieftain's eyes flashed sudden fire;
He drew a pistol from his breast,
Took aim, then dropt it sore distrest.

"I might have slain my babe instead.
Come, Evan, come," the father said,
And through his heart a tremour ran:
"We 'll fight our quarrel man to man."

"Wrong unavenged I 've never borne,"
Said Evan, speaking loud in scorn:
"You 've heard my answer, proud Maclaine.
I will not fight you—think again."

The lady stood in mute despair,
With freezing blood and stiffening hair;
She moved no limb, she spoke no word,
She could but look upon her lord.

He saw the quivering of her eye,
Pale lips, and speechless agony—
And doing battle with his pride,
"Give back the boy—I yield," he cried.

A storm of passion shook his mind,
Anger, and shame, and love combined;
But love prevailed, and, bending low,
He bared his shoulders to the blow.

"I smite you," said the clansman true;
"Forgive me, chief, the deed I do!
For by yon Heaven that hears me speak,
My dirk in Evan's heart shall reek."

But Evan's face beamed hate and joy;
Close to his breast he hugged the boy:
"Revenge is just, revenge is sweet,
And mine, Lochbuy, shall be complete."

Ere hand could stir, with sudden shock,
He threw the infant o'er the rock;
Then followed with a desperate leap,
Down fifty fathoms to the deep.

They found their bodies in the tide;
And never till the day she died
Was that sad mother known to smile:—
The Niobe of Mulla's isle.

They dragged false Evan from the sea,
And hanged him on a gallows tree;
And ravens fattened on his brain,
To sate the vengeance of Maclaine.

THE EXILE OF CLOUDLAND.

I.

When I was a dweller in Cloudland
I dwelt in a rich and a proud land;
I was lord of the clime,
I was king of the time:
And the sun and the shower,
The leaf and the flower,
All came to my bidding in Cloudland.

II.

I was monarch supreme in my Cloudland,
I was master of fate in that proud land;
I would not endure
That a grief without cure,
A love that could end,
Or a false-hearted friend,
Should dwell for an instant in Cloudland.

III.

My Cloudland, my beautiful Cloudland,
I made thee a great and a proud land:
With skies ever bright,
And with hearts ever light:—
Neither sorrow nor sin
Found a harbour within,
And Love was the law of my Cloudland.

IV.

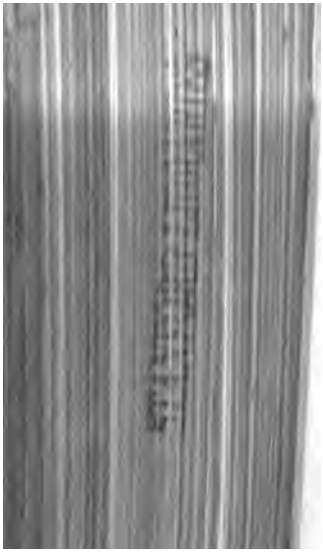
But, alas for myself and my proud land!
There came Revolution in Cloudland;
My people, untrue,
Broke my sceptre in two,
And, false to their vow,
Took the crown from my brow,
And banished me far from my Cloudland.

V.

My Cloudland, my beautiful Cloudland,
How happy was I in that proud land!
All the wisdom I 've won
Since my realm was undone,
Is but poor to repay
What I lost in the day
When I turned my last looks upon Cloudland.

VI.

Oh, ye thoughts and ye feelings of Cloudland!
Ye died when I quitted that proud land!
I wander discrowned,
On a bare chilly ground;
An exile forlorn,
Weary, weary, and worn,
Never more to revisit my Cloudland!



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THE LEGEND OF THE WILLOW-WEED.

THE Willow-weed, or Willow-herb (Epilobium), beautiful alike in its wild state and as an ornament to the garden, begins to drop its purple flowers towards the end of August. Its pod opens at the top, and displays the seeds, each attached to a little car or balloon of the most delicate down, which at the slightest breath of wind are dispersed over the country. There is a fanciful notion attached to the down of the Willow-weed, as also to that of the Thistle and the Dandelion, that if blown into the air by a lady, it will sail away in the direction inhabited by him who is most truly attached to her.

I.

THE Willow-weed displayed no more
To summer suns its purple crown,
But on its fainting forehead bore
Its waving plumes of feathery down.
The rosy-cheeked and black-eyed Nell,
As beautiful as she was kind,
Broke off the flower to try a spell,
And spread it smiling to the wind.
"Fly, feathery down!" she said, and blew—
"To North or South, to East or West;
But travel sure, and tell me true,
Where dwelleth he that loves me best."

II.

The gentle breath of Ellen's lips
Let loose the little slim-built cars,
As light as Mab's aërial ships,
In which she journeys to the stars.
By current of the breeze impelled,
The frail balloon went floating forth,
But, traitor to the hope it held,
Was slowly borne towards the North.
"False flower," she cried, "the spell is nought:
There is a magnet in the West—
Thou shouldst have travelled with my thought:
Thou know'st him not that loves me best."

III.

Behind a tree the youth she loved
Stood, feeding fancy with delight:
He clasped her willing hand, and proved
That she had wrought the charm aright.
"Though I lay hid, the flower was wise:
Thy look, thy voice, thy spell it knew,
And, drawing magic from thine eyes,
Toward my throbbing heart it flew."
"Fly, flower," she said, "fly fair and free,
To North or South, to East or West:
Thou shall be Love's own flower to me,
For sake of him who loves me best."

AN AUTUMNAL LYRIC.

I.

How liberal and lovely
Is all the varied year;
The Winter only showers,
And the Summer only flowers,
To bring ripe Autumn here.
When roared the wintry tempest,
When fell the sleet and snow,
When rushed the mountain torrents
In vernal overflow;
When fell the sweet spring blossoms
Into the lap of June,
And leaves grew thick and juicy
In many a summer noon:
'T was all for sake of Autumn,
So bountiful and free—
'T was all for the golden harvest—
'T was all for thee and me.

II.

We 've lost the Spring-time glories,
And pomp of Summer's day;
We prized them well and truly,
But formed no wish unduly
That all the months were May.

We knew, and we were grateful,
That after these had fled,
The wheat-stalk, fully laden,
Would bear a heavy head;
That mulberries would ripen,
And filberts cluster brown,
And winds through orchards roving
Shake pulpy apples down.
We knew that fruitful Autumn
Would smile on field and tree,
And pour its annual treasure,
And all for thee and me.

III.

And now that we have garnered
The tribute of the year,
We 'll seek our humble fellows
For whom no corn-field yellows,
And bid them to our cheer.
And, grateful for the blessings
So bounteously bestowed,
We 'll share them with the needy
That meet us on our road:
With the gleaner and the beggar,
And the man of low estate,
With the widow and the orphan,
And the stranger at our gate.

So shall the Autumn bless us,
And Heaven be pleased to see;
And the prayers of the sorrow-stricken
Ascend for thee and me.

LOVE'S QUESTIONS AND REPLIES.

I.

I SEND a question to my dear
Each morning by the lark,
And every night the nightingale
Brings answer ere the dark.
The question needs no other words,
And this is the reply—
"I'll love thee, dearest, while I live,
And bless thee if I die."

II.

I send a message by the rose;
It says, "Thou breathing grace,
Thy modest virtue, like this flower,
Spreads fragrance round thy place."
The lily brings the answer meet:
"O thou whom I adore,
My heart is spotless as these leaves,
And loves thee evermore."

HAPPY LOVE.

I.

WHAT is the meaning of the song
That rings so clear and loud,
Thou nightingale amid the copse—
Thou lark above the cloud?
What says thy song, thou joyous thrush,
Up in the walnut tree?
"I love my love, because I know
My love loves me."

II.

What is the meaning of thy thought,
O maiden fair and young?
There is such pleasure in thine eyes,
Such music on thy tongue,
There is such glory on thy face—
What can the meaning be?
"I love my love, because I know
My love loves me."

III.

O happy words! at Beauty's feet
We sing them ere our prime:
And when the early summers pass,
And Care comes on with Time,

HAPPY LOVE.

P. 166.

[redacted]

Still be it ours, in Care's despite,
To join the chorus free—
"I love my love, because I know
My love loves me."

UNHAPPY JOHN.

I.

UNHAPPY John doubts woman's truth,
And vows true love is dead and gone;—
Why?—He was jilted in his youth;
A false fair maid abandoned John:
Because he found one cankered peach,
All fruit is worthless in his eyes.—
Come forth, ye gentle souls, and teach
The selfish craven how he lies;
Come forth, ye ladies bright and fair,
Point at him your reproving hands,
And let your eyes your truth declare,
And shame him where he stands.

II.

Unhappy John is sick of schemes;
He doubts the use of striving on;—
Why?—Something is amiss, it seems,
And failure has disheartened John;

He moans in pitiful distress,
Because his projects topple down.—
Come forth, ye masters of success,
Ye builders of your own renown,
Who dig the mine or fell the oak;
Show him your hard and blistered hands,
Tell him the worth of stroke on stroke,
And shame him where he stands.

III.

Unhappy John distrusts his kind;
He gives the world his malison:—
Why?—He was somewhat weak and blind,
And a false rogue defrauded John.
He thinks misanthropy is right,
If he be cheated of his pelf.—
Come forth, true souls, and in your light
Depict the bigot to himself.
Come forth, ye generous and good,
With spotless hearts and liberal hands,
Show him the face of brotherhood,
And shame him where he stands.

MAY MARY.

A STREET ROMANCE.

I.

"What! is it you, May Mary?
You, in this tawdry gown?
With painted cheeks, and hollow eyes,
An outcast in this wretched guise,
A victim of the town?

II.

"Oh Mary! sad May Mary!
Five little years ago,
I saw you on the village green,
A bashful maiden of sixteen,
As pure as falling snow.

III.

"Oh desolate May Mary!
Your face was blooming then,
Your laugh rang merry in our ears,
And lovely both in smiles and tears,
You won the hearts of men.

We looked upon your face,
And could not choose but breath
That Heaven would shield you w
And light you with its grace.

V.

"How are you fallen, May Mary
You are the scorner's mark;
There is a cloud upon your fame
There is a blight upon your nam
Your light has turned to dark.

VI.

"And, Oh forlorn May Mary!
It grieves me to behold
The woe that guilt has brought
The change that grief has wroug
It makes my blood run cold.

VIII.

"Alas!" said sad May Mary,
"My dearest hopes are gone;
No chance is left to my desire,
I am down-trodden in the mire,
My days of joy are done.

IX.

"Mine is the old, old story—
I foolishly believed;—
I gave my heart in joy and pain;
But loving, was not loved again;—
Abandoned and deceived.

X.

"Yet I, e'en I, May Mary,
A target set for scorn,
And clinging to a desperate life.
Neither a maiden, nor a wife,
Despised, undone, forlorn,

XI.

"I, even I, was happy!
But three short months ago,
I had a child, a lovely child,
Fair-haired, blue-eyed, most sweet and mild,
A blessing in my woe.

XII.

"The little creature prattled
With soft angelic words ;—
It made me think of days gone by,
Of village bowers, a cloudless sky,
And songs of happy birds.

XIII.

"It had a sense—God save it—
To mine superior far :
It drew me from the wrong to right :—
In utter darkness 't was a light,
A beacon and a star.

XIV.

"I was most weak and sinful :—
I listened to Despair :—
When frenzied thoughts possessed my brai
Gin was the solace of my pain,
The soother of my care.

XV.

"The little creature saw it :
'T was sane, when I was mad :
And said such things, I wondered oft
To hear that infant voice so soft,
Breathe goodness to the bad.

XVI.

"It made me love lost Virtue,
It cheered my darkest day,
It was a vision in my rest,
It was a floweret in my breast,
It drove my guilt away.

XVII.

"The child is dead:—May Mary
But lives its loss to moan;
The only thing that loved her here
Has gone to Heaven—her heart is sear,—
She walks the world alone!—"

XVIII.

"God help thee, sad May Mary!
Though guilt on guilt be piled,
The heart may hope to be forgiven
That patiently confides in Heaven,
And loves a little child.

XIX.

"Look up! forlorn May Mary,
And kiss the chastening rod!
Thy child has only gone before,
Amid the seraphs that adore
It pleads for thee to God."

A HAND TO T

I.

You 're rich, and yet you ar
You are not selfish, hard, or
You look upon the common
With sympathy, and not disd
You 'd travel far to share you
With humble sorrow unconse
You 'd raise the orphan from
And help the sad and widow
Give me your hand—you sha
I love you as a brother.

II.

You 're poor, and yet you do
Or hate the wealthy for their
You toil contented night and

III.

And what care I how rich you be?
I love you if your thoughts are pure:—
What signifies your poverty,
If you can struggle and endure?
'T is not the birds that make the spring,
'T is not the crown that makes the king:—
If you are wise, and good, and just,
You 've riches better than all other.
Give me your hand—you shall—you must—
I love you as a brother.

LESS THAN A MAN.

When at the feet of wealth and power
He 'd kneel and flatter, cringe and cower,
Then haste some poorer man to spurn,
And play the tyrant in his turn;
Then is a man less than a man—
Then we pity him all we can.

When by his words he leads his friends
To danger for his selfish ends,
And leaves them in the evil day
To stand or fall as best they may;
Then is a man less than a man—
Then we pity him all we can.

When without sowing he would reap,
When he makes a vow he fails to keep;
When he would rather beg or steal,
Than labour for an honest meal;
Then is a man less than a man—
Then we pity him all we can.

When by misfortune stricken down,
He whines and whimpers through the town,
And never lifts his strong right arm
To save himself from further harm:
Then is a man less than a man—
Then we pity him all we can.

Whene'er he plays the coward's part,
And trifles with a woman's heart,
Or scorns, ill-uses, and deceives
The love that lingers and believes;
Then is a man less than a man—
Then we pity him all we can.

When he delights in raising strife,
Or values honour less than life;
When he insults a fallen foe,
Or at a woman aims a blow;
Then is a man less than a man—
Then we pity him all we can.

IF I WERE A VOICE.

I.

If I were a voice, a persuasive voice,
That could travel the wide world through,
I would fly on the beams of the morning light,
And speak to men with a gentle might,
And tell them to be true.
I 'd fly, I 'd fly, o'er land and sea,
Wherever a human heart might be,
Telling a tale, or singing a song,
In praise of the right—in blame of the wrong.

II.

If I were a voice, a consoling voice,
I 'd fly on the wings of air,
The homes of Sorrow and Guilt I 'd seek,
And calm and truthful words I 'd speak
To save them from Despair.
I 'd fly, I 'd fly, o'er the crowded town,
And drop, like the happy sun-light, down
Into the hearts of suffering men,
And teach them to rejoice again.

III.

If I were a voice, a convincing voice,
I 'd travel with the wind,
And whenever I saw the nations torn
By warfare, jealousy, or scorn,

Or hatred of their kind,
I 'd fly, I 'd fly, on the thunder-crash,
And into their blinded bosoms flash;
And, all their evil thoughts subdued,
I 'd teach them Christian Brotherhood.

IV.

If I were a voice, a pervading voice,
I 'd seek the kings of Earth:
I 'd find them alone on their beds at night,
And whisper words that should guide them right—
Lessons of priceless worth:
I 'd fly more swift than the swiftest bird,
And tell them things they never heard—
Truths which the ages for aye repeat—
Unknown to the statesmen at their feet.

V.

If I were a voice, an immortal voice,
I 'd speak in the people's ear:
And whenever they shouted "*Liberty*,"
Without deserving to be free,
I 'd make their error clear.
I 'd fly, I 'd fly, on the wings of day,
Rebuking wrong on my world-wide way,
And making all the Earth rejoice—
If *I* were a voice—an immortal voice.

THOUGHTS AMID REVOLUTIONS.

I.—THE BATTLE OF CHANGE.

I.

GREAT thoughts are heaving in the world's wide breast;
The Time is labouring with a mighty birth;
The old ideas fall.
Men wander up and down in wild unrest;
A sense of change preparing for the Earth
Broods over all.
There lies a gloom on all things under Heaven—
A gloom portentous to the quiet men,
Who see no joy in being driven
Onwards from change, ever to change again;
Who never walk but on the beaten ways,
And love the breath of yesterdays;—
Men who would rather sit and sleep
Where sunbeams through the ivies creep,

Each at his door-post all alone,
Heedless of near or distant wars,
Then wake and listen to the moan
Of storm-vexed forests, nodding to the stars—
Or hear, far off, the melancholy roar
Of billows, white with wrath, battling against the shore

II.

Deep on their troubled souls the shadow lies;
And in that shadow come and go—
While fitful lightnings write upon the skies,
And mystic voices chant the coming woe—
Titanic phantoms swathed in mist and flame,
The mighty ghosts of things without a name,
Mingling with forms more palpably defined,
That whirl and dance like leaves upon the wind;
Who marshal in array their arrowy hosts,
And rush to battle in a cloud-like land;
Thick phalanxed on those far aerial coasts,
As swarms of locusts plaguing Samarcand.
"Oh, who would live," they cry, "in time like this!
A time of conflict fierce, and trouble strange;
When Old and New, over a dark abyss,
Fight the great battle of relentless Change?"
And still before their eyes discrowned kings,
Desolate chiefs, and aged priests forlorn,
Flit by—confused—with all incongruous things,
Swooping in vise and fall on ponderous wings;

While here and there, amid a golden light,
Angelic faces, sweet as summer morn,
Gleam for an instant ere extinguished quite,
Or change to stony skulls, and spectres livid white.

III.

But not to me—oh! not to me appear
Eternal glooms. I see a brighter sky,
I feel the healthful motion of the sphere;
And, lying down upon the grass, I hear
Far, far away, yet drawing near,
A low sweet sound of ringing melody:
I see the swift-winged arrows fly;
I see the battle and the combatants;
I know the cause for which their weapons flash;
I hear the martial music and the chants,
The shock of hosts, the armour clash
As Thought meets Thought;—but far beyond I see,
Adown the abysses of the time to be,
The well-won victory of Right;
The laying down of useless swords and spears;
The reconcilement ardently desired
Of Universal TRUTH with MIGHT,—
Whose long estrangement, filling earth with tears,
Gave every manly heart, divinely fired,
A lingering love, a hope inspired,
To reconcile them, never more to sunder.
Far, far away above the rumbling thunder,

I see the splendour of another day.
Ever since infant Time began
There has been darkness over man:
It rolls and shrivels up! It melts away!

II.—THE PROSPECTS OF THE FUTURE

I.

"FRIEND of the People—if thy soul can see
The dawning splendours of futurity;
If to thy finer sense the truths are clear
Which we behold not, let their light appear.
Show us their outline; manifest to men
The far-off glories hidden from their ken:
Draw back the curtain, that our hearts may know
What gloom we quit, and to what light we go!"

II.

"Man of the People—Truth abides its time,
And rolls for ever in a track sublime;
There is no mist or darkness on its way
But of man's placing; an eternal day
Surrounds and follows it; and if mine eyes
Can bear its blaze, and trace its symmetries,
Measure its distance, and its advent wait,
I am no prophet—I but calculate."

III.

"Friend of the People—when *I* look around,
I see but sorrows cumbering the ground:
I see the poor made poorer by the law,
And rulers ruling not by love but awe.
I see the many, ignorant and bad,
Wretched and reckless, and my heart is sad.
The people suffer, self-degraded long:
Where is the remedy to right the wrong?"

IV.

"Man of the People—sorrow makes thee blind.
Look up through tears; be hopeful for mankind.
I weep not, nor deplore, for I behold
Of the new dawn the purple and the gold;—
Error is mortal—even while I look
Its basements crumble; knowledge opes a book
In which the child may read the social plan,
And how to remedy the wrongs of man."

V.

"Friend of the People—truth is slow to cast
Its lustre on us. Falsehood shrouds the past
And dims the present. Lo! we fight and slay
While preaching peace. We hate, yet daily say,
'Blessed is Love.' We are a fearful crowd:
We scorn ourselves, we pander to the proud,
More in our Might than in our Right we trust.
When shall such evils pass, and men be just?"

War and oppression, hate and lust of
Dwindling and dying on the wiser ea
Which learns to blush that e'er it ga
And LOVE and LABOUR pouring from
Incessant plenty o'er the happy lands

VII.

"Friend of the People—I would fair
Doubt is a pang: but when I look, I
At vast impediments. How shall we
The armies of the Wrong, that war
How shall we share, among the sons
That none may lack—the corn, the w
Must war ride rampant o'er the worl
Ere love be law and misery cease to

VIII.

"Man of the People—not on swords
Is the reliance of the coming years

IX.

"The Earth is good, and bountiful, and fair:
Her choicest blessings are the destined share
Of all her children, who in love combine
Wisely to labour; this the law divine
Of the new era. Mighty thoughts have sprung
From the world's throbbing heart upon its tongue—
I see their triumph, and I join the cry.
Man of the People—watch! the hour is nigh."

III.—A WARNING VOICE TO THE PARISIANS.

(APRIL, 1848.)

I.

BEWARE, O France! to-day,
Of the dangers in thy way.
In thy majesty and might,
In the splendour of thy Right,
Thou may'st look, with unconcern,
Upon despots, fain to turn
Their swords upon thy bosom free and fair—
Thou may'st view, without alarms,
Hostile monarchies in arms,
And with Justice for thy captain thou may'st dare
All the hate of foreign foes;
Yet, for dangers worse than those
Look around thee, young Republic, and beware!

II.

Thou hast overturned a throne
That was based on fraud alone;
Thou hast swept in sudden wrath
All its panders from thy path;
Thou hast done a glorious deed,
And immortal be thy meed—
May thy garlands ever flourish green and fair!
But take heed, and ponder well,
Lest the tyranny that fell
Have not left a worse to follow as its heir.
Unhappy is the land
Where a mob is head and hand:
Thou hast known the peril once—oh, beware!

III.

Of the fool of good intent,
With his schemes impertinent;
Of the stubborn theorist;
And the dense philosophist,
Who would mould the world afresh,
And make men of wood—not flesh,
Mathematically modelled on the square;
Of the false and glib-tongued knave;
Of the sycophantic slave,
Who would lick the wild beast's feet in his lair;
Of the frenzied zealot, blind
In his love of human-kind—
Oh, beware, for Freedom's sake—oh, beware!

IV.

Though you say that *we* bow down
To the sceptre and the crown—
That we bend the fawning knee
To a titled luxury;
More wretched far than this
Is to see a people kiss
The mire-bedraggled tatters hanging bare
Of the rabble in the street;
And sit slavering at the feet
Of the ignorant and hungry *proletaire*,
As if virtue fled the breast
That could boast a decent vest;—
Oh, beware of mob-idolatry—beware!

V.

In the universal heart
Throbs a pulse that takes thy part;
Through the nations, far and near,
Runs a sympathy sincere,
Burns a hope that thou wilt be
An example to the free—
A people that can think as well as dare;—
Thou can'st mar, but thou shouldst make,
Thou shouldst build as well as break,
And raise a noble structure firm and fair.
Mighty hopes pervade the earth;
It was thou that gav'st them birth:
Beware lest thou destroy them,—oh beware!

(March, 1848.)

I.

Gaze, ye crowd of happy idlers,
Gaze upon it, girls and boys;
Here is life to charm your fancy,
Mimic show of griefs and joys.
Paper queens and tinsel princes,
Pasteboard monarchs play their par
While you laugh, admire, or pity,
Seeing Nature, and not art.
Little think you as ye wonder,
As each enters, struts, retires,
That they are but wooden plaything
Senseless puppets, moved by wires.

II.

Screened from sight, behind the cu

You will find the world divided
(Or be blinder than your sires)
'Twixt the puppets, great and little,
And the pullers of the wires.

III.

When you see a fool acquiring
Name and station and respect,
And a supple-sinewed cringer
Walking stedfast and erect;
When you see a silly monarch
At an opera-dancer's feet,
And the opera-dancer braving
Mobs and factions in the street;
Ask yourselves behind what curtain
Stand the men whose high desires
Set the little dolls in motion,
And whose fingers pull the wires.

IV.

When you see an able statesman,
Trained to love and do the right,
Acting like a stubborn maniac—
Deaf to reason, blind to light;
When you see a hoary monarch,
Taught in Fortune's roughest school,
Scorning all his own experience,
And becoming knave or fool;

Ask if Fate, or those who work it,
Shaping meaner men's desires,
Stand behind to play the showman
To these puppets of the wires.

V.

When you see a greedy rabble
Crowding to the public way,
Scenting plunder in disorder,
As the raven scents his prey,
Moved at once by nobler motives,
Scorning pillage as a shame,
Overturning thrones and systems,
All for freedom, all for fame :—
Give not these the only credit,
Millions plod, while one aspires,
High ambitions work behind them,
Clever fingers pull the wires.

VI.

When you see that daily drama,
Goodness drawn into a snare,
Genius yoked to drudgery's waggon,
Virtue driven to despair,
Innocence betrayed to ruin,
Youth inveigled into vice,
And the blind man unsuspecting
Led, to stumble on the ice ;

Sigh that good men's prayers and efforts
Cannot quench the base desires,
Cannot stay the ruthless fingers
Of the villains at the wires.

VII.

Watch the show, and learn the lesson,
That with men and mortal things
He alone is truly potent
Who can guide and work the springs.
Learn how great to curb the vicious,
Help the weak, the sinking save;
Learn how mean to be a puppet,
Misdirected by a knave.
Learn to look behind the curtain;—
Wisest he that still inquires,
When he acts for self or others,
Whose the hand that pulls the wires.

V.—THE COURTSHIP OF ANARCHY.

(JUNE, 1848.)

I.

SAID Anarchy to Liberty,
"Divinest maid, whom all adore,
Great is the love I bear to thee,
Come to my arms for evermore;

And lay their homage at our feet

II.

Said Liberty to Anarchy,
" With reeking gore thy fingers c
Through blood thou 'st waded to
And curses quiver on thy lip ;
Thy heart o'erflows with guile an
With wicked hate, with senseless
And groans and misery track thy
Begone—and leave me to my tea

III.

Said Anarchy to Liberty,
" Reproach me not, O maiden fai
If I have sinned, 't was love of th
Impelled my spirit to despair,
And thou, of all the world, shoul
Indulgent on such love sublime :

I never saw thee but to shun,
Or weep hot tears of grief and shame—
Nor thought of deeds which thou hast done,
Except to shudder at thy name."

V.

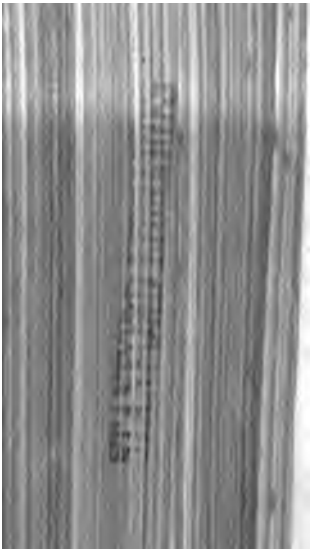
Said Anarchy to Liberty,
"Thy heart is hard and insincere;
How often hast thou smiled on me,
And breathed love-speeches in my ear!
How often whispered me to smite,
How often prompted bloodiest deeds;
And all to give thy soul delight,
And stay thy sanguinary needs."

VI.

Said Liberty to Anarchy,
"Thy heart is dull, thine eyes are blind;
I have a sister like to me
In form and features, not in mind.
Her name is LICENCE; 't was for her
The passion bubbled in thy veins;
'T was she that was thy worshipper;
She clings to thee while life remains."

VII.

Said Anarchy to Liberty,
"I know thee well, I've known thee long—
Thy face, thy form, thy symmetry
Have filled my heart with yearnings strong;



Hate from o
A new Mill

Said Liberty
"I dwell wi
I have no b
With Hate
To me thou
Let Licence
Deep in my
I fly thee, an

VI.—A CA

Come forth, and show thy beaming face—
The world has learned to doubt thee;
Come forth—shed light upon our place;
We cannot live without thee!

II.

A brazen-browed and vulgar jade,
Not like thee in a feature,
In thy white robes and wreath arrayed—
A coarse-tongued, shameless creature—
Struts o'er the earth, and takes thy name,
Sows hatred and dissension,
And sanctions deeds of guilt and shame,
Which thou wouldst blush to mention.

III.

Not like thyself—an angel sweet,
Whose lips would scorn to utter
The filthy language of the street,
Or bywords of the gutter—
She mingles with the vilest crowd,
She shouts, and roars, and curses,
Shakes hands with thieves—she is not proud—
And gambols with cut-purses.

IV.

She calls herself a goddess bright,
The suffering people's saviour,
Who shows the nations truth and right,
And teaches kings behaviour;

She plays dishonest capers.

V.

Come forth and shame this coun
Oh, maiden fair and holy;
Oh, Liberty! divinely sweet,
Beloved of high and lowly!
Come forth, thy heavenly charm
And teach mankind their duty;
And let the adoring world behol
Thine intellectual beauty.

VI.

Though blinded mobs might see
And tyrant monarchs hate thee;
Yet all true hearts thine advent
And all the realms await thee.
So fair thou art, so full of grace,
The nations will adore thee;

Come forth, serene, refulgent, clear,
Th' expectant earth adorning;
And all the cheats shall disappear
Like torchlight in the morning.

VII.—ROME. 1848-9.

I.

Rome imperial! Rome majestic!
Shade of greatness, vanished all—
Looking down th' abyss of ages
To behold thy rise and fall,
We can trace upon thy forehead,
Queen and wonder of thy day,
Broadly marked the awful sentence,
"*Pass Away.*"

II.

Great, but wicked—fair, but cruel,
Sceptered mischief, worshipped long.
Never yet did men or nations
Prosper finally in wrong.
Justice did her work upon thee,
Mightier than thine her sway,
'T was her voice pronounced thy judgment—
"*Pass Away!*"

Looking dimly through the fut
The same shadow we behold—
Shadow of a power departing,
Spectre of a great decay,
Bearing on its front the motto,
"*Pass Away.*"

IV.

Whither went the ancient Cæs
With the pomp of peace or wa
Thither go the modern pontiffs
With dominion grander far.
Papal stole and regal purple
Fall in ripeness of the day,
Cæsar's crown and Pope's tiara
"*Pass Away!*"

V.

Priestly Rome! thy cup is filli

VI.

If hereafter from thy ashes
A new Phœnix shall ascend,
May she learn to dwell with Virtue,
And take Freedom for her friend.
If as thou she clogs the spirit,
And denies the truth of day,
On her head thy doom be spoken—
"*Pass Away!*"

VIII.—THE BROTHERHOOD OF NATIONS.

AN ANTICIPATION.

"Peuples! formez une sainte alliance.
Et donnez—vous la main."
DE BERANGER.

I.

The wars had ceased: the weary nations furled
Their tattered flags, and sheathed their blunted swords;
And, sick of blood, the decimated world
Counted its scars, its glories, and rewards.
A little whisper, raised in doubt and fear,
Made an appeal to all the suffering lands—
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands.

II.

Old men left childless and disconsolate;
Widows forlorn, and maidens sorrow-crowned;
The children loitering at the cottage gate;
The young men mournful, gazing on the ground,
Joined in the cry, lamenting, yet of cheer—
Repeating ever, *Oh, ye ruined lands,*
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands.

III.

The ploughman singing at the early morn,
Stopped in his song, and shuddered to behold,
Through the long furrows for the future corn,
Half buried skulls projecting from the mould—
Bones of his brethren, scattered far and near:
And sadly gazing sighed, *Unhappy lands,*
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands.

IV.

The whisper spread—it gathered as it went;
From crowd to crowd the aspiration flew;
Distracted Europe stanched the wounds that rent
Her bleeding bosom, healed at Waterloo;
Her wisest sons with voices loud and clear
Took up the words and bore them o'er the lands—
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands.

V.

"Why should ye drag," said they, "the furious car
Of blind ambition? why with sweat and moil
Follow the panting demi-gods of war,
And with your blood make runnels through the soil?
Long have ye suffered—long in mad career
Borne fire and sword and sorrow through the lands—
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands.

VI.

"Sheathed be the sword for ever—let the drum
Be schoolboy's pastime—let your battles cease,
And be the cannon's voice for ever dumb,
Except to celebrate the joys of peace.
Are ye not brothers? God, whom we revere,
Is he not Father of all climes and lands?—
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands."

VII.

The words grew oracles; from mouth to mouth
Rapid as light the truthful accents ran,
From the cold Norland to the sunny South—
From East to West; they warmed the heart of man;
The prosperous people with a sound of cheer
Passed the glad watchword through the smiling lands—
Form an alliance holy and sincere,
And join, join hands.

Preserved as r
When men we
Peace, the fair
Dropped corn a
Form an allian
And join, join h

England forgot
France blushed
German, Italian
Taught kings a l
KNOWLEDGE acl
And LOVE becan
When that allian
Had joined all ha

Yet shall not we, thou mighty THOUGHT,
Despair thy triumph yet to see,
Or doubt the good that shall be wrought
In thy great name, FRATERNITY.

II.

By prophets told, by psalmists sung,
Preached on the Mount by lips sublime,
The theme of every sage's tongue
For twice a thousand years of time;
What happy progress hast thou made?
What bliss to man has flowed from thee?
What war and bloodshed hast thou stayed?
What peace affirmed, FRATERNITY?

III.

Alas! the years have failed to teach
The obvious lesson to mankind,
A myriad preachers failed to preach
Conviction to the deaf and blind.
Still do we rush to furious War,
Still to the slayer bend the knee,
And still, most Christian as we are,
Forget thy name, FRATERNITY.

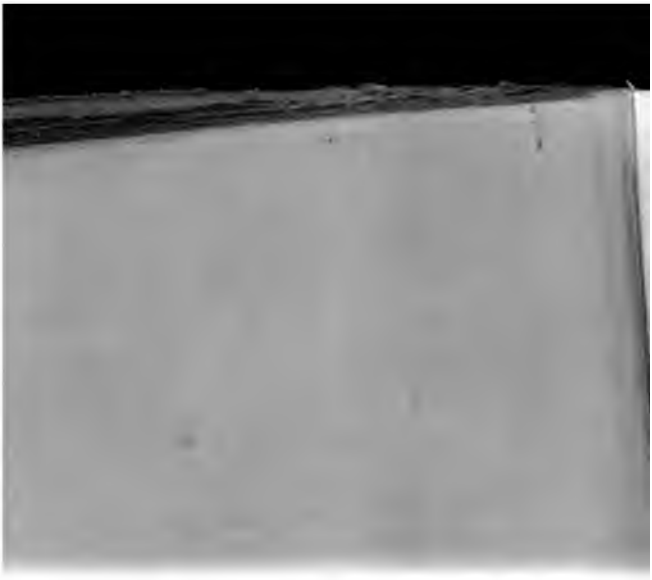
IV.

And shall we, crammed with mutual hates,
Despise our neighbour for a flaw?
And sneer, because he promulgates,
Before he understands, thy law?

Thy name a faith, FRATERNITY

V.

The preacher may belie his cree
But still the truth preserves its
The sage may do a foolish deed,
Yet wisdom shares not in the sh
Be scorning hushed—be cavil d
Whatever ills the world may se
We 'll look for blessings yet to
In thy great name, FRATERNIT



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